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COVER: James Stewart helps Team USA to their fourth straight MXdN win
© Sully

CONTENTS: Scott Elderfield leading Gareth Swanepoel leading Neville Bradshaw leading Lewis Gregory at Hawkstone Park
© Sully

STIR IT UP



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2009 STRIKE IRIE COLOR KIT AVAILABLE NOW

COMMENT

Yep, we got smoked again. And by 'we' I don't just mean Team GB – I mean every MX nation that doesn't drink root beer, pig out at Taco Bell and have a President by the name of George Dubya Bush.

That's just one of the good things about the Motocross des Nations – traditionally we hate the French, despise the Germans, dislike the Italians, sneer at the Spanish, look down our noses at the Aussies and generally speaking are fairly apathetic towards the Mongolians. But as soon as the MXdN rolls around we unite against a common foe. When else would we be willing on a Frenchman to win? Claim a Belgian victory as our own? Gladly recognise Australia as part of the Commonwealth? Solidarity is a beautiful thing!

Of course, the driving force behind our deep-seated desire to see Team USA get their collective arse handed to them is jealousy. You can trace this jealousy from the days of Johnny O, Danny The Door, the Little Professor, Too Hip and the Hurricane through the era of Showtime and Fro Daddy right up to The GOAT and the present day trio of Bubba, RV and Red Dog. Not only were/are they faster than us they also had/have cooler nicknames (obviously, RV apart). Truth of the matter is that the Yanks dominate motocross and no amount of excuses (currently ranging from them being allowed to run louder bikes through to the downright libellous) can get away from this fact.

Okay, so it's not purely based on jealousy – there's a certain rock star arrogance that gets right up my nose. After Sunday's races I bumped into Tyla Rattray who was sat casually on a scooter at the side of the KTM big rig. The world MX2 champ hadn't had the best of days but happily consented to our request for an interview and patiently waited while we wrestled with our video camera (see what he had to say at www.dirtbikerider.co.uk).

This scenario just wouldn't have happened if I'd wanted to have a word with, say, Villopoto outside of the press conference. Even our US correspondent Steve Cox – who's known all of Team America since they first broke into the pro ranks – had to jump through hoops to get an interview. Away from the track Team America and assorted flunkies swept through the paddock in a sea of red, white and blue with a couple of heavies never far away. What were they afraid of? Assassination attempts? Or actually having to talk to mere mortals? I just don't get it...

We all assumed they were – barring mechanical problems or injury – going to retain the Chamberlain Trophy and what went down at Donington summed up what everyone already knew. In Stewart and Villopoto they have the fastest two riders in the world but after this pair of awesomely quick men the talent is no deeper than in the GPs. Timmy Ferry may have taken the overall in the Open class but he didn't look that special and don't forget all the GP big guns bar Steve Ramon were packed into the MX1 division.

There are some people out there in internet land who reckon the US were actually lucky to win after Stewart crashed out of the lead in the final race and couldn't restart his Monster Energy Kawasaki but this is a crock of sh*t. I'd say the US were in fact unlucky not to win by a much bigger margin – just as Team GB were unlucky not to finish on the podium after Billy Mac crashed at the end of the third moto.

On the subject of the Brits I reckon they all rode out of their skins. Tommy's second moto was an awesome display of controlled aggression. Shaun was pretty beat up but still posted a pair of solid results and Billy was, well, Billy was just being Billy. He frustrates the hell out of all of us at times but when he crashed with just a couple of laps to go he was pushing for second and racing the only way he knows how – balls out and 100 per cent committed. Expecting him to settle for third on the podium when he had a sniff of second would be like expecting your Auntie Ethel's horny Highland terrier not to hump your leg. It ain't going to happen...

Sean



UNADILLA THRILLER!

MANX MAN-MOUNTAIN DAVID KNIGHT TAKES HIS SECOND CONSECUTIVE GNCC TITLE AT UNADILLA WITH HIS SEVENTH VICTORY OF THE YEAR

Manx off-road living legend David Knight bravely battled through the mud and slop of Unadilla to take his seventh win of the 2008 GNCC season and with it his second US Grand National Cross Country championship title with two rounds left to run.

The two-time world enduro champion wasn't expecting to wrap up the championship so early but when his closest challenger in the points race – Kiwi Paul Whibley – ran out of fuel on the final lap of the tortuous three-hour event the title was his.

A torrential downpour hit the area just one hour before the race was due to begin, turning conditions from perfect to potentially dangerous in no time at all but neither that or the field of XC1 Pro class riders could stop Knighter. After making a midpack start and getting severely roasted during the opening lap the 30-year-old pitted for fresh gloves and goggles before going on to dominate the event in true DK style.

"It's a great feeling to have won my second US GNCC title," says David. "I have to thank my mechanic Scotty, all my sponsors and the entire KTM off-road team for their support and hard work

this year. We've had some great races and some disappointing races but to finally win the title is amazing.

"I feel bad for Paul Whibley though. He's ridden really well all year so to see him run out of fuel here, which handed me the championship, isn't how I hoped things would end. I've also had some disappointing races this year but despite the horrible conditions here everything went really well.

"The conditions really were bad. It was so wet and muddy that following another rider was almost impossible. I really wanted to win the race and I pushed hard to work my way to the front. I had a few riders to pass and managed to get into the lead just before the end of the lap.

"I had to pit to change my gloves so I had to re-pass Nate [Kanne] but once I got out front I just tried to enjoy myself and not make too many mistakes.

"I knew that I could win the championship here but I wasn't expecting to. This makes all the hard work during the summer break worthwhile. I can relax a little bit now and enjoy the last few rounds of the series."

WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

OREGON SCIENTIFIC ACTION CAMERA ATC5K

Helmet cameras have become big business of late with more and more electrical giants figuring out what works and what doesn't when it comes to filming yourself in a hands-free stylee.

Oregon Scientific have long been considered one of the industry leaders when it comes to helmet-cam technology and their latest titbit – the ATC5K – is a reet good bit of kit. Basically it comes with absolutely everything you need – and more – to create simple home movies and it can also be used as a webcam and stills camera too. Amazing!

You can get your hands on an ATC5K by logging on to www.mx1.co.uk/dbr and purchasing one of said miracle products for £149.95 or you can try to win one of your very own in this very simple competition. To be in a chance of winning all you have to do is answer this easy question – and believe us it is very easy.

Which team won the Motocross des Nations held at Donington Park recently?

- Is it: A) Mongolia
B) Ethiopia
C) USA
D) UAE



WHERE'S WILLIAM?

FIND BILLY MAC AND WIN A PAIR OF TCX PRO 2 BOOTS

If you spot Billy's head superimposed on someone else's body somewhere in this month's magazine you could find yourself the proud owner of a pair of top-of-the range TCX Pro 2 MX boots courtesy of our reet best buds at Nevis Marketing.

Once you've worked out where's William you need to text the word DBRWILLY followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to 81800. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on November 13 with the first correct answer chosen at random getting the hoof-holders (don't worry, we'll give the winner a bell to get their size)...

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When you've figured out the answer you have to text the word ATC5K followed by a space, your answer (either A, B, C or D), another space and then your name and postcode to 81800. You'll then receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

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FANCY A DATE?

2009 CALENDAR ON SALE NOW

If you fancy a whole lot more than a date or two with the DBR crew then drop us a line on 01524 834030 or look us up on the web at www.dirtbikerider.com and get your hands on our 2009 calendar – cos it's frikkin' full of 'em!

With 365 of our favourite days delicately and lovingly slipped inside along with 14 top-notch images of dirt bike delightry, the DBR/TMX 2009 calendar – at just £9.99 – is a must-have item to pin up on your bedroom wall, your kitchen wall, your office wall, your garage wall, Hadrian's Wall or even a wonderwall.



MX2 action from Hawkstone Park with Swordy (#7) nailing the holeshot

SCOTTISH POWER!

MACKENZIE AND SIMPSON SEAL THE DEAL AT HAWKSTONE PARK WHILE MOLSON SIGN OFF IN STYLE

After seven hard rounds of race action the title chases for both classes in the 2008 Maxxis British Motocross Championship were still undecided as the circus hit Hawkstone Park.

CAS Honda's Billy MacKenzie sat on a hefty lead in the MX1 class which meant he could wrap things up early after race one and roll out a rattly CR500 for moto two but fellow Scot Shaun Simpson had to wait until the fat lady started belting out a karaoke classic before he could relax with the title in hand.

Pushed hard on the day and in the championship by another flying Scotsman – Stephen Sword – the 20-year-old from Dundee who desperately needs a nickname (suggestions on a postcard to the usual address please) finished second behind Swordy twice on the day but finally got to nail the #1 plate to a factory KTM UK machine before he moves on to a factory KTM ride in 2009.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet even though I've been thinking about winning the championship since Brampton," says Shaun. "I've got to say thanks to Roger Magee for all the support – the team have

really stepped it up this year and my bike has been excellent. I'd also like to thank my trainer, my mum, my dad and my brother who's done an excellent job – he's only 17 years old – so hat's off to him. I'll be back to defend my British title with Roger's support next year and I'm really looking forward to working with him and the team again."

For Mike and Paula Church – and their entire family – the Hawkstone Park races would be extremely emotional as they marked the final time that the Molson team would race before being disbanded at the end of the season. It was fitting then that the team's racers Stephen Sword, Tom Church and Gareth Swanepoel would make a clean sweep of the podium – of sorts – as Swordy and Swanie went 1-3 in MX2 while TC took second behind his future CCM team-mate Ray Rowson in MX1.

"It's a sad day for the team but it's not all bad y'know," reckons TC. "Lisa's pregnant and for the family that's great. Next year will be a lot different for all of us – personally I can't wait!"

SPANISHFLY!

BOU WRAPS UP THE WTC TITLE THEN LEADS THE SPANISH TO TDN VICTORY TOO...

Photo by EK

Spanish sensation Toni Bou secures his second successive outdoor world title with a convincing victory at the Grand Prix of Spain. Main championship rival Adam Raga finishes second on the day and in the final series standings.

Holding a comfortable 14-point lead in the championship standings over Raga going into the final round it's Bou who stamps his authority on his home event and lays down the gauntlet to his would-be challengers with a very impressive first lap score of just three marks lost. Bou turns in another single score lap in the second half of the competition – dropping just seven marks – to end the day on a total of 10 meaning his combined two-lap total is lower than anything anybody else can manage on either their first or second laps.

"I'm very happy to win this event and my second world championship title here in Spain," says Bou. "This has not been an easy season – there has been a lot of pressure to defend my title from last year and the riding has been very good. I have constantly been fighting with Adam and Fuji who have been very strong – they did not let me relax for a moment."

For Dougie Lampkin the 2008 series has been a very difficult and disappointing one and the final round is no different. "Sixth place today and sixth in the championship is not how I wanted to end the season," says Dougie. "I feel like I have ridden well in the last few events so it's disappointing to end the season like this."

Next stop on the world trials tour is the Trials des Nations that this year is held in Andorra – home of goats, goat cheese and altitude sickness. The Spaniards rule supreme once more taking their fifth TdN on the trot. Fielding a team made up of four riders out of the top five in the WTC, it's not surprising that the Spaniards dominate the event – especially when you consider it's held on more or less home soil, rocks and logs for them (Andorra is a small principality plastered in the Pyrenees between Spain and France).

The British team of Lampkin, Michael Brown, James Dabill and Romaniacs champ Graham Jarvis is beaten back to third by the very motivated team of Japanese riders much to Lampkin's disgust. "We came here knowing that we could be second so to finish third is disappointing," says Dougie.

The British ladies' team are also left feeling disappointed as they feel that over-the-top observing stops them from coming out on top as they had for the last two years in a row. Finally finishing third behind the Spanish and the Germans, the British trio of Maria Conway, Donna Fox and Becky Cook are gutted.

"After winning for the last two years this is a great disappointment," explains Maria. "We have struggled with the observers all day. I think as the favourites we were their highest targets, which was tough as the sections were difficult enough without having to fight anything else. We know we should have not let this get to us but clearly it did. We have a strong team and we really thought this could be our third win in a row."

• For full WTC series standings and results of the Trials des Nations log on to www.dirtbikerider.com

Toni Bou retains his WTC title – then leads the Spanish to TdN glory



SHOWGO!

IT'S ALMOST DIRT BIKE SHOW TIME SO GET READY TO RUSH TO STONELEIGH

Europe's largest off-road exhibition – the one and only Dirt Bike Show – is all set to open its doors to the public this year on November 13-16 at Stoneleigh Park near Coventry. For 2008 the show is promising to be more exciting than ever as there'll be over 115 exhibitors displaying off-road bikes, safety gear, clothing, accessories, tools, graphics and other assorted dirt bike products and services.

This year the show will offer one of the first opportunities for you to see all the new 2009 model off-road machinery that you could ever wish to clap your eyes on as well as some exotic championship winning race machinery too.

You can also meet and greet many star riders including newly crowned British MX2 champion Shaun Simpson, Monster Yamaha's Josh Coppins, Geoff Walker, Molson Kawasaki's Tom Church and Stephen Sword as well as Carl Nunn, Geoff Walker, Steve Colley, James Dabill plus past masters including Dave Thorpe, Geoff Walker, Dave Watson and Sammy Miller.

As well as new bikes and star riders like Geoff Walker there'll be plenty of 2009 racewear for you to feast your eyes on and many bargains to be had in the retail halls. And if that's not enough to entice you to the Midlands for this off-road extravaganza then

maybe the chance of seeing the Purple Helmets perform – for an extra three quid – in the Live Action Arena will persuade you to come to the most awesome off-road show on this planet!

Stoneleigh Park is situated within a stone's throw of the M1, M6, M40, M42 and M69 motorways and has excellent rail links too with the nearest station being Leamington Spa just four miles away. Or if you're feeling a little bit jetset then Birmingham International Airport is only 15 miles away. It's all good however you plan to get there and when you do there's the double bonus of free – yes free – parking and we all know that you can't beat free parking (unless people are gonna pay you to park and that's not gonna happen because it's just a crazy fantasy)!

Tickets for the event – priced at £15 on the door or £12 in advance (with discounts available for pensioners, students, nippers and families of four) – are on sale now through the official Dirt Bike Show website at www.dirtbikeshow.com. If you're not hooked up to the internet – or you don't want to pay the £1 booking fee – you can call the ticket sales hotline on **0844 5810735** and buy some there also.

Remember that the last day you can buy cut price advanced tickets is November 9

WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

FIVE PAIRS OF DBS TICKETS MUST BE WON!

Something that's even better than free parking at an event is when you get free tickets too. And because we're a kind and considerate bunch of northern monkeys here at DBR we've hooked up with the Dirt Bike Show promoters Promoto to offer five lucky readers and one of their lucky friends free tickets to this outstanding annual event.

All you have to do to win one of the five pairs of tickets we've got to give away is answer this simple Dirt Bike Show related question. In what year will this year's Dirt Bike Show take place?

- Is it:
- A) 2009
 - B) 2007
 - C) 2008
 - D) 2001 A Space Odyssey

When you've figured out the answer you have to text the word DBS followed by a space, your answer (either A, B, C or D), another space and then your name and postcode to 81800. You'll then receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.* Entries close at noon on November 3 and the five lucky winners will be drawn immediately afterwards and notified on the same day.

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AM-DRAM!

AFTER SIX EXCITING ROUNDS OF RACE ACTION THE MX1 AMCA TITLE CHASE IS STILL WIDE OPEN

Words and photos by Mike Wood

With one round remaining in the 2008 AMCA championships Phil Mercer requires just 14 points at the final round to secure his richly deserved MX2 crown. In all six previous rounds held this year Phil has finished on the podium and barring an absolute nightmare should comfortably claim that title.

Phil's season-long consistency has almost been matched by young guns Lee Dunham and Lee Payne. Separated by just three points, a no-holds-barred scrap looks set for the season's finale as the two Lees dispute the silver and bronze medal positions.

In MX1 Clinton Barrs' season is over after he suffered a serious knee injury during a meeting at Foxholes. With Barrs out Brad O'Leary – the triple MX2 champion – stepped up his game and with both David Campbell and Ben Saunders encountering problems during round six at Norley, O'Leary's overall success on the day has now set up a thrilling three-way title shoot-out.

Saunders holds a slender three-point advantage over Campbell with both pre-season favourites looking nervously over their shoulders as O'Leary closes in.

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1 Ben Saunders (Delkevic Kawasaki)	329 points
2 David Campbell (Honda)	326
3 Brad O'Leary (Direct CCTVIAMS KTM)	315
4 Charlie Hollis (Mission Control Honda)	274
5 Clinton Barrs (Fowlers KTM)	259

MX2 >>

1 Phil Mercer (Delkevic Kawasaki)	392 points
2 Lee Dunham (MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	330
3 Lee Payne (Malin Floors/RC Yamaha)	327
4 Matt Porter (Select Homes Honda)	250
5 Sean Frayne (Honda)	224

Brad O'Leary is within striking distance of the MX1 crown



Lee Payne's aiming for silver in MX2



GORDON CROCKARD

ARSE OVER TIT!

GC'S FLAT-OUT – BUT NOT IN A GOOD WAY – AFTER TAKING A TRIP OVER THE BARS AT THE MXdN...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

Monday morning after the Motocross Destinations at Donington Park. Man I feel rubbish. This time yesterday I was in the Queen's Hospital in Nottingham getting observed and waiting for a CT scan of my brain. When I woke up that morning I had intended to win the B Final for Ireland and thus qualify ourselves for the main Motocross des Nations races later in the day. I even prepared all the goggles that I would need for the day's races – that's how sure I was of Team Ireland's victory in the B Final.

Anyhow, it never happened how I thought it would. My team-mates Martin Barr and Stuart Edmonds did race the B Final and although Martin won and Stuart was 11th it just wasn't enough to get the team into the main MXdN event. As for me, the crash I had in Sunday morning warm-up was without a doubt the biggest jump crash I have ever had in my entire 21-year bike riding career.

On the tabletop beside the large Red Bull finish line jump I approached it on the second lap and accelerated off the take-off as normal and as I had done all day long on Saturday. As soon as my wheels left the ground the motor just cut out dead. I thought it had snapped a conrod or something it was that sudden. I was thrown immediately through the handlebars and flew in front of the bike all the way to the far side of the downside. Crash-bang-wallop-roll-tumble-rag doll-play dead! I was completely wrecked on the flat of my back struggling to move any limbs and not getting much air as I had knocked the wind out of myself.

I crawled off the track and the medics got me into the ambulance and up to the Donington Park circuit medical centre. After the doctor looked at the state of me there he shipped me off to hospital for a CT scan to check for bleeding. All was okay thankfully and I got back to the track in time to see the final moto of the day. No broken bones or permanent damage so considering how violent the crash was I'm pretty happy to survive it with what little damage I sustained.

To my surprise the motor was 100 per cent and the likely reason for it cutting out was an obstruction to the turning of the wheel – either a stone or piece of debris wood jammed the brake or sprocket and stopped the wheel from turning freely. On Saturday practice I had a large piece of wood jam the front disc and it locked up and put me on the ground. I wouldn't really agree with all the tampering that the guys do to the dirt. Call me old school but I prefer the dirt in its natural form and not messed with by ripping, wood chipping or any other creative methods to change it. My opinion on this topic is very strong and totally pointless to express as no change will come to track preparation and I'll only sound like I'm complaining anyway.

Next year I'm going to race all British championship

rounds in the Maxxis series and also the MMX events. I'll do that for the PAR Honda team on the all-new CRF450. I no longer have any dealings or obligation to compete in the GNCC in America so I can fully focus my efforts for motocross for 2009. As much as I would love to chase the dream of being a top GP star racing in the world championship I simply disagree with paying 10,000 Euros to have the pleasure of sitting on the startline with the other 39 riders who will be paying the same.

I started racing GPs in 1997 and back then if you qualified for Sunday's motos you were paid around 400 quid regardless of whether you even finished the two motos. On top of that you were awarded prize money down to 20th place. Good prize money too that was all in cash so Mr Taxman had a job-and-a-half to claim his cut. By 2004 the world championship decided to stop paying qualifying money and prize money. I remember rider strikes and all uproar over this new unfair system. Eventually the riders realised the promoters had the power to do what they liked and the moaning lessened and it was accepted times were changing. Now for 2009 the rider is getting another shafting. Like before, there is nothing can be done about it and if you want to ride GPs then you'd best be prepared to fork out 10 grand for the privilege of being on the startline.

From track design and dirt preparation to financial criteria required, you can clearly see how the sport is changing direction. I will be interested to see if it will be a change for the better or for the worse in terms of the sport as a whole. From my position it is for the worse and I'm sorry to see how it is going. I hear rumours of teams stopping and I'll be watching to see what sort of teams will be filling any of the vacancies.

Big up to BC, Benny and Bry-Mac. On a recent trip to Sweden for the Gothenburg Supercross I learned exactly how kebab meat can actually taste pretty good. You can always rely on the Scottish for good banter. Good luck on your Oz trip Benny.

Well done Shaun Simpson for winning the MX2 British and also to Big Jock for winning the MX1 championship. Has anyone realised that the last time an Englishman won the British Open/MX1 championship was back in 1999? A Scot, a Kiwi, a Belgian, a Northern Irishman and a South African have all won in the last 10 years. And before that Jocke Karlsson the Swede won two titles. Not wanting to develop any issues with any English folks but I thought it was a fairly unnoticed statistic which might be of interest to some readers. Roll on the '09 season to see if the pattern continues, eh?

Later – Gordon Crashard...

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STEPHEN SWORD

WINDING DOWN!

IT'S BEEN A TOUGH SEASON AND A HECTIC MONTH BUT NOW SWORDY'S GOT HIS '09 RIDE SORTED AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO SOME R N' R...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sully

Things have been flat-out this past month with racing and getting sorted for next year. With only two GPs and one British championship left I set myself some goals for those races. I wanted to jump up into the top 10 of the world with another podium along the way and win both races at Hawkstone Park to give myself the best possible chance of winning the title.

I didn't have such a great day at the Dutch GP in Lierop. The track was so tough physically and rougher than ever and I was feeling a bit under the weather so was suffering from low energy most of the weekend. Going away from there with a 15th and a 13th place was not what I was looking for.

I got myself fit and well for the Italian GP the following week and I was really aiming for a podium. It was also the Molson Kawasaki team's last ever GP so there was a sadness in the team that weekend but also a lot of drive and focus to finish off on a high. Result wise as a team we did well. Swanny improved in only his second GP since his comeback, TC had two strong rides to finish 12th overall and I just missed the podium which I was disappointed about but still managed to jump up to ninth in the overall standings.

On the Saturday night we all as a team ate at the truck. It's what usually happens but this time it was for the last time. Paula does all the cooking which is always fantastic – I think she deserves a Michelin star myself. Lisa did a small presentation to say thanks to everyone and we all were presented with an awesome picture of our time with the team. Lisa has done a fantastic job with the team and setting such a high standard for the rest of the paddock to follow.

Hawkstone was the final stop on the calendar and I was still hoping to clinch the title. I felt really good on the bike all day and was satisfied with my result but it was not to be. Winning both races just wasn't enough and Shaun had two solid second places to secure his first British.

Looking back it was Desertmartin where it went wrong for me – I went into the race with a 23-point lead and left nine behind. Riding with a separated shoulder was difficult that day but I had to try to salvage some points. Not taking

anything away from Shaun though, he has had a good year not only in the British but in the world as well. I will just have to put it right next year and win.

There was a mechanics' race at Hawkstone which was such a good laugh. Ryan my mechanic went out riding about a week before so his hands were covered in blisters and the track was rough so it was not going to be an easy race. It was 10 minutes plus a lap.

Mike the engine guy went out on my other bike and had the number 007 like James Bond and was wearing my pink kit so he did look the part! They all did great – I was pit boarding for them and got my revenge telling them to WAKE UP as that is what they do to us! After that we all went back and had champagne – after a year of no drinking it went down great and Jodie had to drive me home.

I am really looking forward to next year already and I have a new team and a new bike. I will be riding a KTM for the KTM UK team run by Roger Magee. It's all looking good and I'm excited about the move. It seems strange to stop riding now – it's been flat-out for so long and then you just stop. I'm having a month off to rest and recharge the batteries before starting up in November again. Saying that, I only lasted three days without training and ended up going to the gym to spin out but compared to what I usually do it's easy. Lots of golf and a holiday is on the cards I think.

I was invited along to TC's annual golf day. We played Texas scramble and my team was made up of Jamie Coppins (cousin of Josh), Simon Jones and myself. Unfortunately, we didn't win but had a great game and I enjoyed the company guys.

It was my dad's 50th and we'll be going back to Scotland in a few weeks to celebrate with him – happy birthday dad! I really want to take the time to thank everyone who has supported me through the last few years of my career – all the sponsors and fans that have believed in me when it looked bleak that I would ever come back on form after my injury. It has meant so much so thanks.

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Stu Edmonds showed guts and determination at Donington but GC's injury meant they missed the Main Event



NO CIGAR!

TEAM IRELAND JUST MISS OUT ON MAKING THE CUT FOR THE POINTS-PAYING RACES AT THE MXdN

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

Team Ireland only just missed out on qualification for the A Final at the MXdN by the slimmest of margins and all three of our riders performed admirably in qualification to finish 14th, 15th and 22nd which would usually have been more than enough to make the Main Event.

On the opening lap of the Sunday morning warm-up for the B Final, Gordon Crockard's machine stalled in mid-flight and threw GC over the handlebars. He landed squarely on his head resulting in severe concussion. The Ulsterman was taken to the local hospital for a precautionary MRA scan – I would say by now Gordy near on glows in the dark due to the amount of MRA scan radiation in his body over the past few seasons.

Down to just a two-man team, Martin Barr and Stuart Edmonds sat behind the startgate for the B Final in determined mood – pride for the island of Ireland was to be restored at all cost. Riding under the UTAG Yamaha banner for the last time, Martin pulled out all the stops and served up a big thank you to Steve Dixon's squad for his support over the past few years by taking a win to the delight of the many hundreds of teetotal Irish fans who never touched a drink throughout the entire weekend at Donington Park.

Stu Edmonds raced his butt off and despite two crashes the Dubliner backed up Barr's performance with a creditable 11th place finish which was good enough to cement second place overall for Ireland in the group without their team leader.

All in all I reckon the critics were welcome to stay at home and Donington Park was a resounding success. The promoters put on a show worthy of the title, the racing was fast and furious on a track that provided multiple line choices throughout the day and – dare I say it – the USA did not win the des Nations, Europe lost it!

Without a shadow of doubt the des Nations is the single best motocross meeting in the world – the one and only event that stirs up the passion and pride that

unites great rivals for one weekend.

It was no surprise to hear that KTM UK bossman Roger Magee had been considering drawing the curtain on his hugely successful team at the end of the season. After all, how do you top the accolades reached in 2008?

An emotional rollercoaster and then some would not come close – big Roger's head must have been all over the place. Against the odds and sometimes in the face of adversity Roger and the Simpsons forged a path not well travelled by the faint of heart. 'Winners never quit and quitters never win' pretty much sums up the ethos behind young Shaun's journey from struggling young talent to a factory KTM ride in 2009.

From 2004 Roger built his team around the young Scot who found himself without a ride when Tim Chambers pulled out of racing. Over the following few seasons the team experienced moments of jubilation in between an abundance of injury and frustration which only added resolve and determination to finish the job in hand.

What odds would have been offered on Shaun earning the world #4 plate this year? And after winning the British MX2 championship with team-mate James Noble taking the runner-up position in MX1 and Alex Snow winning the British U21 series where could he go from here? With Shaun riding under the factory KTM rig at the GPs next year it was going to have to be someone very special to keep Roger focused – step forward Stephen Sword.

The very real possibility of winning a world championship will drive Roger forwards and with Stephen on board the KTM UK machinery, fighting for the #1 plate is on the cards. It may even be possible that Roger will have both Shaun and Stephen under the awning at British championship level next season.

In the 'season that never was' Natalie Kane made a resounding return to top level women's motocross by stamping her authority on the British ladies' championship by being eight seconds-a-lap faster than

her second-placed rival at the famous Hawkstone Park circuit. This year has been a tough call for the Irish lass who had her sights set on the GP trail before doctors advised her to take time out to heal a shoulder injury which required a lengthy rehabilitation schedule. By all accounts investing in her health and long-term fitness should pay dividends in 2009. This lady will mix it with the world's best come March – welcome back Natalie.

Martin Barr climbed onto the third step of the MX2 British championship podium although a mixed bag of results towards the end of the season nearly put Martin's third position within grasp of another rider of Irish descent by the name of Neville Bradshaw. For 2009 the man from the port of Larne will change teams and colour of steed – Rob Hooper is yearning for future success and Barty is hoping to be the one to take Hooper's Relentless Suzuki squad to the next level. Selected GPs are on the cards for '09 but Rob's and Suzuki UK's efforts will be focussed on winning the British crown.

At the time of writing it's looking very much like GC will ride a PAR Homes Honda in the British championships next year – in just a couple of months back in MX racing Gordy has rekindled his passion for the sport. I don't think GC has any aspirations of chasing the GP trail at this stage but winning another British title and earning a few quid for his efforts would make it a more worthwhile exercise. One wonders if GC may compete in the Irish championship's in 09?

Promising young quad racer Philip Kerr who crashed at a recent event at Desertmartin is awaiting transfer to Musgrave Park Hospital rehabilitation centre. Philip, although in severe discomfort, is in good spirits since breaking his back in the accident. Val Bell and the entire motocross fraternity in Ireland wish you well and are praying for you and your family at this time Philip – keep that fighting spirit and positive resolve you have always had.

Yeeeeehaa!



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Alessandro Belometti should be a shoo-in for the Enduro GP class – if plans get the green light

SUPER LEAGUE?

THE WEC'S ALREADY UNDERGONE ONE MAJOR SHAKE-UP UNDER ALAIN BLANCHARD'S CONTROL – NOW HE'S LOOKING TO STIR THINGS UP AGAIN...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

Ask riders what they think of the World Enduro Championship in '08 and most will tell you that they're pretty happy with things. Of course, some will point out one or two areas where they'd like to see things done in another way but as everybody sees things slightly differently to the next person that's to be expected.

Asking riders what's good and what's bad is often a risky business. Each and every competitor has his own agenda. And each and every rider would like things to suit himself – certainly, no rider is ever going to suggest something that would disadvantage himself. But when it comes to the modern day WEC most are agreed it's a much better championship than it was six or seven years ago.

When Alain Blanchard and ABC Communications were announced as the official promoters of the WEC their appointment was met with a great deal of scepticism. 'What does the WEC need a promoter for?' many asked. Not opting for a softly, softly approach, Blanchard came as close as anyone could get to turning the WEC – as everyone knew it at the time – on its head. Out went five classes, in came E1, E1 and E3. He started telling people where they could and couldn't park in the paddock and was seen by many as a power-crazed paddock coordinator and nothing more.

The first year of Blanchard's rule was an interesting one. As he exercised his power as series promoter more than a few team

managers, organisers and riders had their feathers ruffled as he laid down his plan of how the WEC should be organised. To the traditionalists it seemed as if many of the changes being made were simply unnecessary – change for change's sake. But as one and then two seasons passed it became clear to most that what Blanchard was trying to achieve was to simply better organise the WEC.

With no bottomless pot of money, what he would and wouldn't be able to do would always be determined – just as with most things in life – by cost. But the simple fact is that today we have 'proper' enduro events that challenge the world's best as well as a race-day format that everyone knows like the back of their hands. We also have a reliable time keeping/results producing team.

Over the last few years the WEC has stabilised. Most of Blanchard's ideas have been implemented and an even keel has returned to the WEC. Riders, team managers, sponsors and the general public know how the 'easier to understand' events are run. And, most importantly, the numbers of serious complaints from riders are minimal.

But Blanchard, if he gets the green light from the FIM, has plans to shake up the WEC for a second time. So what is he proposing to do to the WEC? Mix enduro with football and create a premier league – the Enduro GP class which will sit above the E1, E2 and E3 classes and be the number one WEC class.

The proposed idea is a relatively simple one and one that some riders have been requesting for a long time. Imagine a pyramid – along the base would be the E1, E2 and E3 classes with the Enduro GP class holding pride of place at the top. In the Enduro GP riders would be allowed to compete on any capacity bike they chose.

So what's football got to do with things? Well, in order to qualify for the Enduro GP class riders would have to finish at the top of either the E1, E2 or E3 classes. Then and only then they would be promoted up into Enduro GP. At the same time as the best from the three existing classes move up, the worst performing riders from Enduro GP would drop back down into either E1, E2 or E3.

Although significantly different to the WEC class structure at present, Blanchard's idea is a relatively simple one. It will however likely be met with scepticism, just as many of his earlier ideas were. Creating what will effectively be a Super League will certainly add a new dimension to the WEC – that's if it ever becomes more than just an idea.

No doubt considerable discussion will be given to the possibility of an Enduro GP class in the coming months. With the idea a sound one, ironing out any possible problems and complications is what now must be done – as well as convincing the FIM that a second overhaul of the WEC is what's best for the championship's long-term future...

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I know it has been asked before but why do the councils continuously keep threatening our tracks? I know quite a lot of people have been writing in about Riverside MX but I don't see the problems it can possibly be causing – it's out of the way and has little if no effect on surrounding areas, everyone that goes always enjoys themselves and the riders are amazing!

This is what we need for our future. My little boy Finley is now a year old and we go up there frequently. This is what I want for his future – off the streets and out of trouble! He may only be one but as soon as the TV comes on he already knows to make bike sounds and MX has to be put on! I have enclosed a picture of Finley at Riverside with his uncle Andrew Wakefield.

Stefani & Finley, Kent

PS Loving DBR – I buy it for the other half every month but read it before he gets home!

We totally agree with you Stefani. It's all too easy to dismiss MX riders as noisy bikers but facilities like Riverside serve a serious purpose in keeping kids off the street and giving them a safe, supervised environment.



RIP OFF?

I'm mailing you as a long-term DBR reader. Never have I seen such a rip off – MXdN tickets at £60 for the weekend, then an extra £20 for a paddock pass.

I've been a motocross fan for many years and travelled to many a GP and this is the most expensive event I will have ever been too. I also have a 15-year-old son to pay for as well. Can someone please explain why this event is so dear? I went to Namur last year and had a ball for half the overall cost.

Andy, via email

In a word Andy, 'no'. It was an awesome weekend and the chance to see Team America on British soil was not to be missed but ticket prices were sky-high and we can see why the majority of fans thought £20 paddock passes were taking the Mickey...

LUCKED OUT

Is it me or does Josh Coppins have the worst luck in motocross history? It seems that God has a grudge against him. Injured before the first GP in '06, almost had the championship sewn-up until Loket in '07 and now it has just been a bad year altogether.

If Josh can get a good start then he has a good race but if he doesn't get a good start then he usually has a crash which is not his fault but this year at Mallory to me Josh raced like a champion because he came from dead last to about top 10. Josh only has next year to win the championship if he does not win this year.

We all need to get behind Josh for the final races and cheer him on like we cheer Tommy Searle and Billy Mac.

Come on Josh, you can win!

Peter, Surrey

Since you wrote in David Philippaerts has taken the MX1 title and we agree that Josh – who's one of the nicest guys you could meet – does appear to have the worst luck going. If he can turn it around and win next year he'll be a very popular champion.

HOSE KNOWS

I've heard a lot of people say that I shouldn't use a jet wash to clean my bike as it blows the seals and stuff like that and that I should just use a hose pipe but when I do use a hose pipe it takes twice as long to clean the bike so I was just wondering if it is okay to use the jet wash.

Chris, South Wales

It's fine to use a jet wash on your steed Chris – just don't point it directly at places where you don't want water to get in. It's also fine to use full stops in letters to DBR n'all...

MAC SNAP!

Attached is a photo of me with Billy MacKenzie at Foxhill. To have it put in your magazine will be amazing – hope to see it in next month's mag.

James, via email



SATISFIED CUSTOMER

I'm just writing back to say thanks to you guys for your help with my RM250 suspension problems – I took your advice and the bike feels lots better!

I rode for the first time in a year at good old Farleigh Castle in a three-hour hare and hounds enduro, didn't do as well as I would have liked but considering I hadn't ridden in such a long time I did well. My lap times were good – I just need to get my pit times down – and I was well surprised by my fitness as I felt good the whole race.

Ian, Wiltshire

Glad we could help out mate...

HERE'S JONNY!

My name is Jonny and I own a 2006 CRF250 which I bought last month but I'm stuck for what pipe to get. Now when a young lad like myself looks for extra bits such as a pipe or a trick new part they usually look at what their favourite rider has on his.

So Billy Mac being my hero I decided to check what pipe he has on his CAS Honda and I discovered he has a Leo Vince pipe on his. Now Leo Vince pipes I know nothing about – do they sound nice and do they last long, are they best for power gains and eliminating bog etc. Can you tell me a little more about Leo Vince exhausts and help me make the right choice for my new ride?

Keep up the good work guys – love reading your mag.

Jonathan, Co Down

There's no doubt about it mate, Leo Vince do make sweet-sounding, performance-pimping exhausts but so do quite a few other aftermarket specialists. But if LV are good enough for Billy Mac then who are we to try and talk you out of buying one?



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk

All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.

Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

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TEAMUSA!

ON THE EVE OF THE MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS WE HOOKED UP WITH PRE-EVENT FAVOURITES TIMMY FERRY, JAMES STEWART AND RYAN VILLOPOTO – AKA TEAM USA – AND FOUND OUT ALL ABOUT GUNS, THONGS AND BEING SCARED OF WATER...

Words by JP O'Connell Photo by rayarcher.com

As soon as their plane touched down we started getting the phone calls. Timmy, James and Ryan begging to be given a shot at DBR's Mano o Mano (o Mano) questionnaire. We got the same calls from Team Mongolia but the language barrier kinda got in the way...

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

TF: "Tom Cruise."

JS: "I really don't know, that's a good question."

RV: "Mark Wahlberg."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

TF: "Had to be in 2006."

JS: "Back when I rode 80s."

RV: "Last year, I probably cleaned one once or twice."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

TF: "Yes I can, it's where you use the shims. Yeah I can do that..."

JS: "I wouldn't even know where to look on the bike for that!"

RV: "No, I don't know how to do that."

DBR: Do you own any guns and if so how many?

TF: "I own two guns."

JS: "I don't but my dad does."

RV: "Probably 25 to 30 of them."

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

TF: "No."

JS: "No, I let other people shoot it then I eat it."

RV: "Yeah, deer is really good and of course fish that I caught. It's not the same as shooting them but I caught them and ate them."

DBR: How many bones have you broken and which were they?

TF: "I've broken three bones – my arm, my thumb and my jaw."

JS: "Too many and all over."

RV: "Three collarbones and my wrist."

DBR: How many and where are your tattoos?

TF: "None."

JS: "None, just scars!"

RV: "None."

DBR: It's the last lap, you're in second and right on the leaders' rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

TF: "Absolutely!"

JS: "For sure!"

RV: "It depends who it is in front of me. That decides whether it is a block pass or a take out."

DBR: What car do you drive?

TF: "Toyota Tundra."

JS: "Ford F-150."

RV: "Toyota Truck."

DBR: If money was no object what car would you drive?

TF: "Still a Toyota Tundra."

JS: "Probably my Ford F-150."

RV: "I don't know. I'm not sure if I would

be one of the really rich guys driving a beat-ass truck or if I would be driving a Bentley..."

DBR: What is your favourite food?

TF: "Chips and Salsa."

JS: "Chicken, it has to be because that is all my trainer allows me to eat!"

RV: "It depends the mood I'm in."

Sometimes it's sushi and sometimes I want a good steak."

DBR: Can you cook and if so what's your signature dish?

TF: "I can't cook whatsoever."

JS: "I can cook eggs but that is about it, I struggle after that."

RV: "I can cook little stuff. Eggs are what I do best."

DBR: If you weren't a motocrosser what would you be?

TF: "Fighter pilot!"

JS: "A golfer."

RV: "Probably building houses with my dad."

DBR: Which is your favourite track?

TF: "Budds Creek."

JS: "Right now it's Red Bud."

RV: "I don't have a favourite track, I like some more than others but they are all different and I like the variety."

DBR: What's your ideal holiday?

TF: "Going home and being with family."

JS: "Going to Las Vegas – of course, it has to be like that earlier question where money is no object!"

RV: "Any trip where I don't have to do anything. I want to have lots of free time."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested and why?

TF: "No."

JS: "No, that's J-Law!"

RV: "No."

DBR: Who is your favourite band?

TF: "Lil Wayne but I like a lot of music."

JS: "I don't have one favourite, I like a lot of different bands."

RV: "I listen to the radio and like some songs but I don't know who the band is."

DBR: When chatting to the ladies what's your best pick-up line?

TF: "I'm already married and my wife's right here so I don't have pick-up lines any more."

JS: "I'm James Stewart!"

RV: "I ride motocross."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

TF: "Blondes, my wife is blonde."

JS: "Brunette."

RV: "Brunette."

DBR: What's your favourite film?

TF: "Napoleon Dynamite."

JS: "Remember the Titans."

RV: "Probably Shooter right now."

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

TF: "I don't like to fly which is weird because I would probably be a fighter pilot if I wasn't a motocross racer."

JS: "No, well maybe drowning. I really don't like water."

RV: "No, not really..."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing article of clothing you've owned/own?

TF: "Sleeping pants with hearts on them!"

JS: "A pair of tight leather pants."

RV: "I've owned one thong!"

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

TF: "My family."

JS: "My AMA Supercross championship."

RV: "My family."

DBR: Favourite race you've ever been in?

TF: "Motocross des Nations in 2007."

JS: "Seattle in 2007 where I won the Supercross title."

RV: "Des Nations last year."

DBR: Have you ever been in a fight and if so did you win?

TF: "Yes I've been in a couple fights. I've won and lost though..."

JS: "Not really, no."

RV: "I wouldn't call it a real fight. I ended up on top so I say I won."

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

TF: "I don't know. The money is better when you win a race."

JS: "Winning a race because when you win you can usually get a girl too."

RV: "I guess it depends on how the race went."

DBR: Who is your sporting hero and why?

TF: "I don't really have one."

JS: "Tiger Woods."

RV: "I'm not really a fan of other sports so I don't have one."

DBR: Which football team do you support?

TF: "I only know American football and it's the Tampa Bay Buccaneers."

JS: "The New England Patriots."

RV: "I'm from Seattle and it's got to be the Seattle Seahawks."

DBR: Will you get time to go sightseeing while you're in the UK and if so what would you like to see?

TF: "I'll have a day after the race so I'll probably go to the Eiffel Tower... No, I'm joking! I'm going to go to London and look around."

JS: "I don't think I have any time to go sightseeing."

RV: "I'll probably have a day and I want to go see Stonehenge."

DBR: What's your best roadtrip story?

TF: "I don't like roadtrips."

JS: "It wasn't really a roadtrip but coming home from a race when I was younger my mechanic made me ride in the back. I threw all his clothes out on the highway and he didn't know until we got home."

RV: "It's not really a roadtrip but last year after the des Nations we kind of destroyed our rental car on the way back to the hotel."

DBR: Tell us something about yourself that no-one else knows.

TF: "My wife knows everything about me so there's nothing no-one else knows."

JS: "I gave Timmy the nickname 'Dirty Dog'. He doesn't always ride clean."

RV: "I can't think of anything."

Ryan Villopoto, James Stewart and Timmy Ferry – one of these men may very well be wearing a thong!





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Price: Pants £119.95 Jersey £29.95
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Supplier: rushracing.co.uk
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As worn by Billy 'I love you guys' MacKenzie as he throttled his CRF450 across the line in first place to wrap up the 2008 British motocross championship at Hawkstone last month, this rather fetching Fox get-up was also aired by James Stewart at the MXdN – in a different colour scheme of course – as he crashed his way to team glory at the world's biggest motocross race. God bless America!

And if you want to be just like Billy n' Bubba – although crashing lots is optional – then you might want to toddle down to your local Fox dealer to grab some of these cool duds. But be quick because these limited edition beauties won't be around for ever. As they say at Netto or Lidl or whichever supermarket it is that knocks out cut price goods every now and then – when they're gone, they're gone!

Price: Pants £125 Jersey £35 Gloves £28

Goggles £49.99

Supplier: foxeurope.com

Contact: 0191 487 6100



RIP N ROLL

HYBRID GOGGLES

While Rip n' Roll have had a bit of a logo redesign the products they produce then pimp are the same top-notch bits of kit that the Woking-based company have been producing since they started out in the vision business just a few years ago.

These here Hybrid goggles are a great example of RnR's work as they're the gosh darn dog's doodlies. Available as a Racer Pack – which includes the Total Vision System (roll-offs), a nose guard and a bag – or simply a Hybrid tear-off goggle that comes with 10 tear-offs and a bag! They are also available in more colour combinations than you can shake a pair of dog's doodlies at and that can only be a good thing, right?

Price: Racer Pack £54.96 Tear Off £24.95

Supplier: racefx.co.uk

Contact: 0845 450 1448





NAT ATTACK!

It's not just Shaun Simpson and Billy Mac who tie up British titles at Hawkstone Park – flying Irish lass Natalie Kane puts a big grin across Suso Suzuki boss Mark Chamberlain's chops when she lifts the ACU national ladies' title in the Shropshire sand. Not bad for someone who's spent a large slice of the '08 season out with a sickly shoulder.

"I got the first round in and then I've been out for most of the year with an injury," says Nat. "Then this got put back to the end of the year so I got to do the second round as well so I'm really pleased – but it was hard going because I've only been back a couple of weeks."

Photo by Suttty

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*Billy Mac reaches for a
tear-off in front of the
packed Donington crowd*

A M E R I C A N EXPRESS!

TEAM USA TAKE THEIR FOURTH STRAIGHT WIN, FRANCE FINISH SECOND AND THE BRITS GO DOWN FIGHTING AS THE MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS ROLLS UP AT DONINGTON PARK...

Words by Sean Lawless and JP O'Connell Photos by Sully and JP O'Connell

BIT FROM THE BRITS

TOMMY SEARLE >>>

"It's been a good day for me. My first race wasn't really that great – I didn't ride how I should ride but my arms pumped up and I made it hard work for myself and just wasn't enjoying it out there.

"The second race we didn't have much break and I was worried because my arms were still pumped up. I got a bad start but I was pushing through – then I crashed on the second lap but I was enjoying it out there and riding like I know I can ride. It was good to get third and I should have really passed Ramon but I didn't have time. But I'm happy with how I done in that second race.

"With the team it's been good – we should have had third

overall. I think we deserved a podium. Billy and Shaun made a couple of mistakes but they were trying really hard so you can't say it's me to blame or them to blame – I could have passed Ramon and then we'd have got third place or in the first I could have done better. I think we all tried our best today and it didn't really happen.

"I'm really looking forward to America now – I know I can run the pace I need to do out there. I didn't really get to race with Ryan at all but I would have liked to and I think my lap times were really good throughout the race – it's just the first two laps he got a good start and I didn't so I lost a lot of ground."

They came, they saw and they kicked butt! Pre-event favourites Team America may not retain their MXdN title in quite as dominant a fashion as they did on home turf in '07 but even with a couple of unscheduled soil samples Uncle Sam's boys are the stand-out stars of Donington Park.

Rightly or wrongly the Motocross des Nations has become a USA vs Rest of the World competition – let's be honest, apart from the odd sycophant how many non-Yankees were hoping to hear any national anthem other than that of America at the end of three hard-fought races? La Marseillaise perhaps? Or God Defend New Zealand? Maybe even Advance Australia Fair? But the Star Spangled Banner?

Of course, most of the fans that pack Donington (figures vary wildly between 40,000 to 60,000 over both days) are holding out for God Save the Queen (sadly not the Sex Pistols' version) and Team GB's attempt to regain the trophy they last won in 1994 gets off to a flying start in Saturday's qualifiers when Billy MacKenzie gates alongside Team USA's James Stewart and sits in second until almost half-distance. The Monster Energy CAS Honda rider slips back to seventh at the flag but it's a solid start that's backed up by Tommy Searle's

fifth in the MX2 qualifying race and Shaun Simpson's seventh in his Open qualifier.

But even at this early stage things are looking ominous with Stewart and Ryan Villopoto winning their qualifiers with ease and the only chink of hope for the ROTW coming in the form of American Timmy Ferry's ninth in the Open qualifying heat.

And there are long faces in the Irish camp as 14th for Gordon Crockard in MX1, 15th for Martin Barr in MX2 and 22nd in the Open class for Stuart Edmonds means they've got a Sunday morning date with the B Final if they're to make it through to the afternoon's Main Event.

The following morning there's more reason to be optimistic as Saturday's clear sunny skies are replaced by clouds and eventually rain. We all know the hardpack, jump-strewn track favours the Americans but how will they get on in a mud race?

Mud riding is second-nature to the Irish but their hopes are dealt a killer blow in the warm-up session when GC bails over the big Red Bull tabletop. It's game over for the day for Gordy and although Barr wins the B Final and Edmonds takes a fine 11th the final transfer spot goes to the Brazilian team.

Newly-crowned MX1 world champ David

Philippaerts grabs the holeshot as the gate drops on the first points-paying race and for two laps the Italian leads Stewart as the best 450cc riders both sides of the Atlantic have to offer go head to head in a GP vs AMA showdown. Stewart finally gets in front and after putting down a brief counterattack from Philippaerts begins to pull clear. Sebastien Pourcel then steps it up for France and once he's disposed of Jonathan Barragan and Philippaerts moves through into second but by this point Stewart's long gone.

Billy Mac rounds the opening lap in seventh – four places ahead of Tommy Gun – and briefly moves up to sixth before being passed by Swiss rider Julien Bill. He then slips back to eighth but soon settles again in seventh when Estonian Tanel Leok pulls out. On the last lap the Scot mounts a final charge and sticks a pass on Kiwi Josh Coppins for sixth at the flag and Searle crosses the line as first MX2 rider home in ninth.

But what of Villopoto? The only MX2 rider to win both his races at the MXdN – an amazing feat he managed last year at Budd's Creek – goes down on the opening lap and restarts near the back. He then stages a lightning charge through the pack and as the flag falls crosses >>>



TEAM USA

JAMES STEWART >>

"Even though I didn't have a great second moto I'm really happy with my weekend. I'm pleased to have won a race here in England and I would have won that second one too if I hadn't thrown it away but still the team won and overall it's been a great day."

"The first race went okay, I had a pretty decent start and I got around the leaders in a few laps. After I grabbed the lead for the first time I had a pretty good battle with Philippaerts for a while

but I ended up making a pass stick and then pulling away and winning – that was good."

"In the second race I got another good start and I was battling with Pourcel this time but I was able to pull away again until I threw it away with just a couple of laps to go when I got a little cross-rutted and jumped onto a hay bale – that ended my hopes of winning that moto right there."



If Anthony Boissiere's front tyre had stayed on the rim France would have won

DADDY'S SAUCE!

QUENTIN SEARLE >>

Tommy Searle's no stranger to the big event and Donington is the third time he's represented his country in the MX2 division at the des Nations. After spending a couple of days hunting down the elusive dad of the US-bound KTM rider we eventually cornered Quentin trackside as he watched his son practising on Sunday morning.

"This is brilliant, I'm really proud of him. It makes it all worthwhile, all of the effort that you put in, I'm really pleased for him. I think that if he could win this weekend it would be really good for him – he was really disappointed at losing out on the world championship. I think if he had a choice between winning this or the championship it would be the championship [laughing] but only because he'd have got 300K for the title!"

Battling for world championships and riding for his country was never part of Quentin's plans for his son but luckily for us Tommy had other ideas. "I never ever thought he'd make a living out of it, it was never what we planned to do – well never what I planned to do, it's what he planned to do! I thought that Tom would maybe one day win the British but he obviously knew that this is what he wanted to do and it just carried on and on from there."

Watching his offspring launching off huge tabletops and hitting killer whoop sections while fully tapped is no problem for laidback Quentin. "I don't get nervous for him at all. I'm lucky that I'm not a nervous person in general – I just let him get on with it out there. I'm never down on him about his riding, I'm of the opinion that he goes out there and he rides his best and if he doesn't do as well as he thinks he should then he will already be upset, he never goes out there to come second. When he didn't win the title this year he was devastated, he was nearly in tears from the minute he got off the bike after the first moto until he got back on it for the second."

The next stop for Tommy will be the US Nationals and everyone in England will be hoping he can head over there and do some damage – but dad doesn't want to see him go.

"I'd rather he stayed in Europe racing the GPs – it's nice having your son close by – but racing in the US has been his dream since he was 14 and now he's getting to live his dream. He's been going out there practising for the last five years so he's got lots of friends already so it shouldn't be too lonely for him."



C'MON AUSSIE

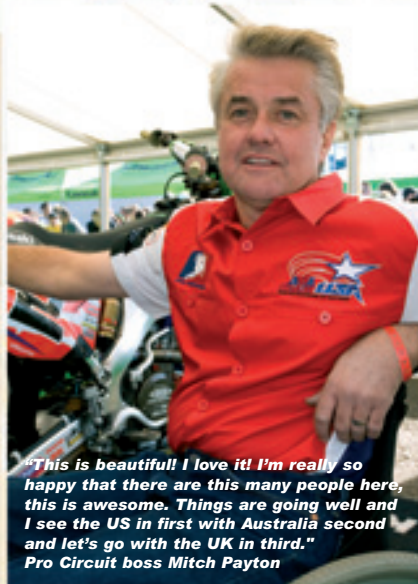
CHAD REED >>

"It was a rough day and I'm a little bit embarrassed by my performance really. I didn't feel good all weekend and I just struggled with the track and with my riding. The Australian team needed a leader today and I wasn't there – I'm very disappointed with myself."

"We were a podium team but none of us rode to our potential and all three of us are definitely disappointed. In the big scheme of

things this race means nothing, it's not part of any championship and we just ride for pride. All we can do is learn from today and come back stronger next year."

"My bike was awesome though and it's only a shame that I wasn't able to twist the throttle and steer it in the right direction – I was a little off today. I'm really looking forward to getting back to supercross so I can get my groove on."



"This is beautiful! I love it! I'm really so happy that there are this many people here, this is awesome. Things are going well and I see the US in first with Australia second and let's go with the UK in third."
Pro Circuit boss Mitch Payton

the line in 10th, less than half-a-second behind Searle. It's a ride made all the more amazing by the fact his fastest lap time – a 2:02.667 – is set on his last lap and is only bettered by the 2:02.499 Stewart sets on lap seven.

Race two is all about Villopoto. Even the best the Open class has to offer can't stick with the little American out of the gate and the AMA National Lites champ is soon a little red, white and blue speck in the distance as he puts in the fastest lap of the race – this time 'only' a 2:05.829 – on his opening circuit to kill the opposition from the get-go. The only rider who looks like he's got anything for Villopoto is MX2 world champ Tyla Rattray. But the South African is a lap behind after pitting to have green fencing removed from his wheel and being able to stay with the American for the remainder of the race is scant consolation for the factory KTM rider who started the day looking for victory.

Searle moves from 10th to eighth on the second lap before a spill costs him a couple of places but after this he holds the Red Bull KTM wide open and sticks passes on – among others – Michael Byrne, Brett Metcalfe and Alex Salvini before finally getting ahead of race holeshotter

Cody Cooper on the final lap. This last pass moves him up to third and right on Steve Ramon's rear wheel as the chequered flag comes out.

The race is a lot tougher for Simpson who crashes in the second turn, injures his thumb and ends the opening lap back in 28th. But as the Scot has shown time and time again this season he's a fighter and even after losing his goggles he fires the KTM UK machine through the pack, pulling back 10 places in five laps and finally crosses the line in 15th to keep British hopes of a podium finish alive.

In Stewart and Villopoto Team USA arguably boast the two quickest riders in the world but it's a three-man team and Timmy Ferry looks to be the weak link. After finishing the opening lap in 13th the Monster Energy Kawasaki rider struggles to make passes and at the flag is only up to ninth. However, with just one 30-minute plus two laps race to go it's the Yanks leading and with Stewart still to race again the odds are stacked in favour of the holders.

The final moto of the day has just about everything you could want for in a race. Stewart nails the holeshot but this time he's >>



"First!" "Our team!" "Fox!"
Monster Energy girls' responses when asked how they see the podium filling out. More than just pretty faces? Hmm...



World MX2 champ Tyla Rattray has a day to forget at Donington

BIT FROM THE BRITS

MARK EASTWOOD >>

"Four laps to go and it was in the bag – we were 10 points ahead of Belgium. There's no-one else like Billy who can come from 16th to fourth and then fall off.

"First race both Tommy and Billy rode a bit stiff but in the end they got it together. The second moto was awesome from Tommy to pass Cody Cooper for

third on the last lap. It was a bit unlucky for Shaun – he had a good start and went down in the second turn and stuck his thumb in the ground. It was obviously hurting him but he came back real good.

"I was pretty impressed with Shaun over the whole weekend – I think he rode well for his country."

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DADDY'S SAUCE!

WILLIE SIMPSON >>

While the weekend is certainly box-fresh for Shaun Simpson, for his dad Willie it's nothing new having ridden himself for Great Britain at the des Nations in 1984 and for Ireland in 1995.

"It's really good for Shaun to be picked but to be honest having ridden so much myself I don't tend to get too excited about things. I felt really weird at the world championship in Bulgaria this year when Shaun was leading the race and I was kind of looking thinking 'hmmm, yeah, he'll crash off in a minute' but he kept on going and kept on going and I was like 'bloody hell!' but even then at the end of it I never got too excited... To be honest this is just like any other meeting for me but it's really nice for Shaun to have been asked.

"Making a career out of it [MX] is making enough money out of it and up until this year he hasn't been making that much at all. It's really only this year that we've been thinking that things may be about to happen. You know last year Shaun finished 24th in the world and fifth in the British and you're thinking he's not really making a career out of it but now this year I'm thinking that he can."

With a dad who's been there and done that as far as the des Nations is concerned, surely Shaun's got an advantage thanks to the advice his dad has been giving him in the lead up to the biggest race of his career.

"You must be joking – I've hardly seen him," laughs Willie. "When he wheels the bike out of the awning on his way to the startline I'll just say to him 'try your best and enjoy it' – that's all you can do."

As far as schoolboy dad syndrome goes that's something Willie leaves to the other fathers.

"No, no, I'm not a schoolboy dad! I would say I've only given him a rocking a couple of times. One time that I do remember was at a schoolboy event where he crashed at the first corner and flattened the exhaust completely. He's jumping up and down like a jack rabbit so I sprint off to the van like an athlete and whip the exhaust off of the spare bike, springs and all. I run back, put the new exhaust on, off he goes and he starts riding round like a wally! I was furious!

"I mean he was jumping about and people put in all that effort to put him back on the track – I was like don't make fools of these people by just pissing around, let's see you rip around and show what you could have done if you hadn't crashed!"

Coming from 24th in the world last year to fourth and a spot on the des Nations team this year is a hell of a turnaround and one that Willie puts down to simply finding the right bike and team.

"I'd say it's definitely getting on the right bike with the right kind of help. We've spent three years with Roger Magee [and] the KTM as a standard part is really good. Once he got on his tuned bike it was just like 'this bike is mega!'"

TEAM USA

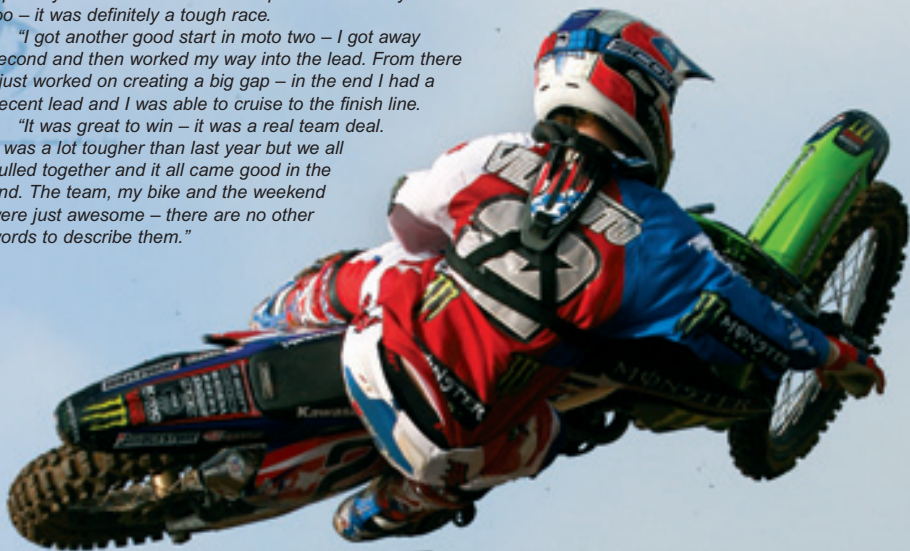
RYAN VILLOPOTO >>

"That first moto was a little rough. I got a decent start and I was running third but then in one of the turns I was just blasted from behind. That meant I had to work my way forward from last. It was hard to come through with the track the way it was and some of the guys were a little squirrely and that made it hard to predict what they'd do too – it was definitely a tough race.

"I got another good start in moto two – I got away second and then worked my way into the lead. From there I just worked on creating a big gap – in the end I had a decent lead and I was able to cruise to the finish line.

"It was great to win – it was a real team deal.

It was a lot tougher than last year but we all pulled together and it all came good in the end. The team, my bike and the weekend were just awesome – there are no other words to describe them."



Billy Mac's push to pass German Max Nagl led to his crash in race three



got Pourcel for company and even though he lays down the fastest lap of the race early doors he can't shake the Frenchman. Pourcel in fact has the nerve to stick a move on Stewart with little love tap up the inside of a right-hander – possibly the only time Stewart's been over-taken all year? The crowd are loving it – well, at least the ROTW fans are – but Pourcel's challenge is short-lived and once the American gets back in front he starts to motor away.

Billy Mac gets taken wide at the start by Nico Aubin after the pair get a great drop but he's got the bit between his teeth and carves his way up the leaderboard. From a lap one position of 16th he's all the way up to fifth by half-distance and while the Yanks still lead the overall standings at one stage Team GB are running as high as second and even with Simpson circulating just outside the top 10 the British trio are

looking a safe third.

Then with four laps to go Stewart drops the Monster Energy Kawasaki, can't restart it and what looked to be a done deal is suddenly up in the air! Pourcel inherits the lead with Leok in tow chased by Max Nagl and Billy Mac. But while it appears a fourth-straight Team USA victory is hanging in the balance, Ferry's in fact putting in a typically workmanlike ride and brings it home for America with a pass on Coppins moving him up to sixth.

This is good enough for the USA's 19th MXdN win but he advances another place with two laps to go when Billy Mac over jumps the stepdown before the pits and bins it. After losing vital places kicking his bike back into life he's away but his 11th place finish coupled with Simpson's 13th sees Team GB slip off the podium by the narrowest of margins.



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BIT FROM THE BRITS

BILLY MACKENZIE >>

"I didn't have the best pick on the start – I gave Shaun the inside gate – but I got an awesome jump and I was coming across and Aubin just didn't turn the corner, he just stayed straight. He was just being a pussy. We both had a mega jump, all he needed to do was turn in and he didn't and I was screaming by the side of him almost under his elbow 'turn, just turn' and he's kept me straight, let like 10 guys through and I was back in like 15th or so – I was f*****g pissed off.

"I got my head down after that. I was racing with Reedy and Barragan and we got in a right dogfight and I was feeling good. Reedy tried to put me over the berm in the first race so I gave it back to him. I just kept moving forward and I was loving it being really aggressive in the corners. I could feel my arms but I ground it out and was hanging on my hardest. We were a safe third but Nagl was in front of me and that would have gave us second and I was having a good race so I just went for it and it ended up I over-jumped the stepdown before the pits and landed in all the bumps. I couldn't brake, I hit one rut head on and sort of just saved it but then I went into the next one and it just flicked me off.

"I had a bit of trouble starting it and then after that I was really trying to get my mojo back. I kept Ramon behind me so I was pleased with that but I was gutted when I came off – I felt like crying. It would have been cool to be on that podium and have everyone cheer for us.

"The track turned out real good. It was a little bit weird because there was lots of good top soil and when that pushed up and made a rut there was like a shiny base on it which was making tyre choice difficult. I had fun out there and the jumps were cool and actually we had some good passing going on which we didn't have at the British or the GP.

"I got a little bit nervous but I didn't feel any pressure. The goal for all of us was to go out and do the best we can. If anything I was more excited, not nervous. The second race was definitely a lot more relaxed for me – first race I tightened up mid race and brought home a sixth but I felt like I could have done better there."



FLYING KIWI

CODY COOPER >>

"I got a good start in my first moto. After that I just put my head down and tried to stay with Villopoto but he edged away until I started finding my rhythm around the middle of the moto. I put in some good laps then and edged away from the guys behind me in third and fourth.

"I got a little bit cross-rutted and crashed and that allowed the guys behind to catch me up. The front of the bike was all twisted up after that and it took a few laps to get adjusted. After that I got a little bit of arm pump too and so I was definitely happy to

finish fourth in that race even though I'm sure I could have finished second if I hadn't crashed.

"In moto two I got a bit of wheel spin coming out of the gate and after that any chance of getting a good start was history. I came through quite well and charged quite hard for a while but then I just blew out and my arms cramped up.

"It's been a real fun weekend, everything went well and I was happy with my riding even if my fitness – due to my month's break from riding – let me down a little."



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ESTONIAN EXPRESS

TANEL LEOK >>>

"The first race was nothing special for me but the second race was really good. I got quite a good start – I was around eighth – and I was able to make a lot of passes early on and then push hard for the whole race because my fitness is so good."

"I was riding well but I could have ridden a lot better, I was making a lot of mistakes because the track was quite hard to ride with many ruts in it – it was difficult but that's good for me because I like difficult tracks."

"At the end I was very close to Pourcel and I set myself up to make a pass on him on the last lap. He closed me off in a corner and I touched him a little bit by accident and I crashed – still second place is quite okay and it was a great end to my year."

BIT FROM THE BRITS

SHAUN SIMPSON >>>

"I don't know how all the points have worked out but if I'd stayed in front of Salvini on the last lap we would have been third or if Billy hadn't have crashed we'd have been third but it wasn't to be."

"But it's been a good weekend, definitely an experience – my first Nations – and I've thoroughly enjoyed it. It's just unfortunate the result just wasn't what we wanted. The second race was good – we just went out and gave it 110 per cent. We couldn't bring it home but it was a real close fought battle. Billy was riding real good and just made a small mistake."

"The 250F was the right decision. The way I've been feeling since my collarbone operation I've just been lacking in the last 10 minutes so it would have been stupid to ride a 450."

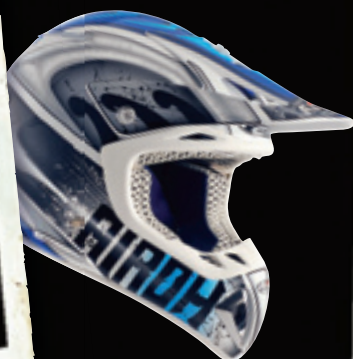
Tyla opts for a Rossi style portrait on his lid



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SWORDY SAYS...

VIEW FROM THE CROWD >>

After the opening two races we bumped into Stephen Sword in the Red Bull stand. A former member of the British MXdN team, Swordy just lost out on a place in the '08 squad to Shaun Simpson. This is what he had to say about the action up to this point...

"Obviously I'd like to be out there but I'm still enjoying watching. Everything looks good – there are a lot of spectators and the track looks well prepared and the British boys are doing well. It's weird not racing to be honest but I'm still enjoying it.

"Tommy's had two solid rides, especially the last one. If he didn't crash I reckon he might have got second. Billy and Shaun would probably be expecting to do a little better – Shaun didn't have any goggles which didn't help him – but you've got to be consistent and that's what they're doing.

"A podium here would be good for the team and good for all the fans and I think they could do it. Hopefully Shaun will keep the goggles on and maybe get a better start and Billy should be solid – a top five for him would be good – and then we'll see where we are.

"In the first race Villopoto came through the pack pretty good and in the second he got the start and pulled a gap. I don't know how fast he was going sort of middle to the end of the race because Tyla stayed behind him but I would imagine he could have stepped it up if he had to. He just looks good on the bike. He's got good speed on him.

"A 250F's no disadvantage around here. Shaun's in the Open class but he's on a 250 and because he's rode it all year and rode it well it doesn't make much sense to jump on the 450 on a track like this. Villopoto and Boissiere were first and second in that one and Ramon was in there and he wasn't getting anywhere near them. With the tracks and the power of the 250s nowadays you can nip around the corners on them – you lose a bit up the straights but you can make that up in other areas. You only need to look at the results.

"Stewart is just Stewart. I thought the first moto was going to be quite a good race at the beginning but obviously he was just settling in – once he got his gap he was gone. And I reckon if he needed to go a bit faster he could have probably put it up another notch."



Race two blasts out the gate with, from left, Scotty Columb, Alex Salvini, Jeremy Van Horebeek, Anthony Boissiere, Brett Metcalfe and Ryan Villopoto



Swordy, with girlfriend Jodie, is a spectator

BUBBA BEATER!

SEBASTIEN POURCEL >>

"I had a great weekend. This win in the MX1 class at the Motocross of Nations has an especially sweet taste. This race is not only an exceptional event but now I'm also the first rider to beat James Stewart during 2008 in a motocross race.

"I'm glad to offer this success to the engineers who worked with us on the 2009 KX450F fuel injection bike, to our mechanics and to all the team staff who never gave up despite me having average results during the last few GPs.

"This weekend I posted the second best time during the practice session and then I finished second in my qualifying race too. I was second in the first moto then during my last race I gave everything I could in the first part of the heat after I got a great start behind Stewart. I tried to follow him and I even passed him for the lead but he had a better rhythm than me and he passed me back. I was about 10 seconds behind him when he crashed out of the lead.

"I took over at the front and in the last laps I was focused to secure my race win and also second place overall for the French team. Leok came close on the last few laps but I took the inside in the corners and defended my line – he tried to pass me on the last but he crashed and victory was mine."



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DADDY'S SAUCE!

BIG BILL MACKENZIE >>

For Billy's dad this isn't the first time his son has represented his country but that's not to say he's still not pleased as punch for his offspring.

"Obviously I'm proud of what he's achieved," says Bill. "It doesn't seem so long ago that he was riding around on the automatics and 60s, then we came into the adults quite early and it was like starting all over. You know what kids are like – they have a goal in their head and you can only take them so far, you've then got to take a backward step and let other people take them forward. Between Steve Dixon, then Kawasaki and now CAS they've taken him a step forward each time."

There comes a time when any parent thinks their nipper is or isn't going to make it and for Bill it was a realisation that came quite early on. "I'd say it was probably when he was in his second year on the 80s when he was about 10. He moved into the 100s and was extremely dominant in that class and I thought then that he could possibly do it.

"But then when kids hit 16/17 until they're about 21, you don't need a computer in the house because they know everything – you can't tell them anything! Billy left when he was about 16 and went with Steve Dixon but I was pretty cute too and anything I wanted done I'd tell Steve and let him tell Billy!"

With his son having back-to-back British MX1 titles under his belt what advice does a dad have for his boy as he prepares to do battle with the world's best?

"I've given him absolutely none," laughs Bill. "I'll watch practice and if I'm lucky I may be able to pick out maybe one or two lines that are better, there will be a lot of other people looking out as well and all the riders will be told the same things. When it's time for him to head down to the line I try and take a step back.

"I'm a bit superstitious about that sort of thing. I remember one time in schoolboys when I was in a position on the track that he could see me, he came past looking at me and crashed! Obviously I've been watching him throughout his career and I see the progression he's been making. I see a difference in him just this year with CAS, just in the last little while where his riding is different – for the better I hasten to add."

At 24 Billy no longer has to worry about getting a schoolboy dad style tear-down if he isn't riding well – or does he?

"There was this one race meeting while at Kawasaki where Billy just wasn't doing what he should have been doing out on the track. Anyway, I walked into the pits where Billy and Martin – the team manager – were sitting and I gave Billy an absolute roasting. I walked out and then came back a little while later to apologise to Martin who was like 'no, no, you know your child better than anyone'. I try to keep his feet on the ground by not being too excitable myself. I'm probably his harshest critic – if he's done something good I'm more likely to tell him where he's done it wrong."



TEAM USA

TIMMY FERRY >>

"Today was amazing. It was really cool to win my class again but the biggest thing was we all worked together well as a team – we all had one bad moto but the other guys were there to pull us through. We definitely won as a team and that's what this race is all about – it has nothing to do with individuality."

RESULTS

MXDN OVERALL CLASSIFICATION

1	USA	(Stewart/Villopoto/Ferry)	26 points
2	France	(Pourcel/Boissiere/Aubin)	31
3	Belgium	(De Dycker/Van Horebeek/Ramon)	41
4	Great Britain	(MacKenzie/Searle/Simpson)	42
5	Italy	(Philippaerts/Monni/Salvini)	45
6	Australia	(Reed/Byrne/Metcalf)	55
7	Spain	(Barragan/Campano/Lazano)	58
8	New Zealand	(Coppins/Columb/Cooper)	63
9	Switzerland	(Bill/Tonus/Wicht)	82
10	Germany	(Nagl/Siegl/Chittaro)	96

RACE ONE (MX1/MX2)

1 James Stewart, 2 Sebastien Pourcel, 3 David Philippaerts, 4 Jonathan Barragan, 5 Julien Bill, 6 Billy MacKenzie, 7 Josh Coppins, 8 Ken De Dycker, 9 Tommy Searle, 10 Ryan Villopoto

RACE TWO (MX2/OPEN)

1 Villopoto, 2 Steve Ramon, 3 Searle, 4 Cody Cooper, 5 Alex Salvini, 6 Zach Osborne, 7 Nico Aubin, 8 Michael Byrne, 9 Timmy Ferry, 10 Brett Metcalfe...15 Shaun Simpson

RACE THREE (MX1/OPEN)

1 Pourcel, 2 Tanel Leok, 3 Max Nagl, 4 De Dycker, 5 Ferry, 6 Coppins, 7 Bill, 8 Reed, 9 Barragan, 10 Aubin, 11 MacKenzie...13 Simpson



Ferry lets fly with the fizz



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







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NEW 250 WORLD CHAMP
GEORGES JOBE
DOMINATES A DUSTY
FIRST MOTO AT MAGGIORA
IN 1980.





was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

QUARTER-POUNDERS!

BACK IN THE DAY THE TROPHÉE DES NATIONS WAS THE QUARTER-LITRE EQUIVALENT OF THE MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS. IN THE FIRST OF A TWO-PART SPECIAL JACK LOOKS BACK ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO A WORLD TEAM CONTEST...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

I first ventured abroad to a world team contest exactly 30 summers ago. No, not the MX des but its little brother the Trophee des Nations which was celebrating its 17th anniversary at Kester in Belgium.

The final year of the 250cc European championship was dominated by Brits Dave Bickers (Greeves) and BSA duo Jeff Smith and Arthur Lampkin back in 1961. The same year also saw the introduction of an international 250cc team competition called the Trophee des Nations that Great Britain won courtesy of that brilliant trio.

They won again a year later, though Smith and Lampkin had been beaten to the first 250cc world individual crown by Swede Torsten Hallman. Torsten then led Sweden to four successive Trophee des triumphs. They also won a fifth, in 1968, before Belgium – led by a flighty youngster on a CZ called Roger De Coster – took command.

De Coster spearheaded 10 successive Belgian victories, starting out with Sylvain Geboers and Joel Robert as team-mates and ending, on my maiden visit in 1978, alongside a

newer generation of Harry Everts and the late Gaston Rahier. That was on home ground at Kester, near Brussels – a magnificent, natural wooded circuit which went on to host several Belgian MX GPs.

I travelled over with British team member Rob Hooper, his mum, dad and fiancée (now wife!) Cheryl. We joined up with fellow young guns Graham Noyce (Honda) and Neil Hudson (Maico) and relatively old boy Andy Robertson (Montesa). Belgium, chasing a 10th successive crown, had the benefit of a massive home crowd to urge on their quartet of De Coster, Rahier, Everts and Jaak van Veltoven (KTM).

Tiny Gaston swept his Suzuki into an early first moto lead ahead of Everts (Bultaco) with British trio Hudson, Noyce and Hooper well placed behind De Coster and Americans Chuck Sun and Bob Hannah. Then, in an electrifying burst, Hudson demoted De Coster and the Yanks in successive laps before following Everts past Rahier on lap five.


To a roar from the fans De Coster recaptured Hudson after 30 frantic minutes but 'Hoop' had plunged downhill past Sun and van Veltoven.

Then, with two laps to go, Rob missed a gear at the foot of a climb and dropped two places, finishing up a frustrated 10th ahead of Noyce. With their three best scores to count, Britain still lay second to Belgium and ahead of Sweden, the States and Czechoslovakia.

But Hooper, Noyce and De Coster all came to grief in turn one of race two. The trio remounted with a vengeance and were hurtling back through the pack when Hooper crashed heavily on lap four. With Swedish duo Hakan Carlqvist and Torleif Hansen dominating proceedings, Noyce and De Coster powered heroically back into the top 10 behind Everts, Czech fliers Jaroslav Falta and Zdenek Velky, Rahier and Hudson.

With Belgium assured of victory, Hudson fell at half-distance, restarting ninth behind Noyce and De Coster. Britain needed good points from Welshman Robertson but 21st behind American Rex Staten wasn't enough. Triumphant Swedes Carlqvist and Hansen crossed the line, their planned dead heat spoiled when Torleif's Kawasaki stuck in third gear and snatched second place by three points from the brave Brits!

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MAGGIORA'S TIGHTEST
DOWNHILL DURING THE
1980 Trophee des



1979 WORLD 250 VICE
CHAMPION MIKE HUDSON
HURLS HIS MAICO AT THE
TROFEE DES IN SWEDEN



With Rob in the local Sister of Mercy Hospital nursing severe back injuries, rostrum celebrations were understandably subdued – as was our journey home minus Hoop and his mum who stayed at her son's bedside. But the resourceful Robert made a miraculous recovery to keep his date with Cheryl at the altar for their planned wedding a month later and 12 months on earned another place in the 1979 MX and Trophee squad for a trip to Finland and Sweden!

There, at the Barkarby Moto Stadium outside Stockholm – on Hakan Carlqvist's local track – newly-crowned world 250 champion 'Carla' annihilated the field on a long, sinuous circuit. For the Brits – third in Finland a week earlier on their 500s – Noyce, Hooper, Hudson and Vaughan Semmens (Maico) all fell foul of a messy opening lap. World 500 champ Noyce retaliated with a mercurial charge back to third place, even harrying early leader Vladimir Kavinov (KTM) before slipping off back to sixth. While Sweden and Russia were tied on 20 points ahead of Belgium on 25, GB lagged in fifth behind the Dutch.

An electrifying Carla, cheered on by his huge audience, again won by over 40 seconds but all the race two drama took place in his wake. Noyce, taken out by Kavinov, struggled with a knee injury. Hudson collided with fiery Finn Gote Liljegren and had to duck a punch as they tangled their bikes! Sweden took command with Carlqvist and Torleif Hansen running up front together again but Torleif's Suzuki stopped at half-distance with a broken gearbox. Former world 250 champ Hakan Andersson responded manfully, wrestling

past Russians Korneev and Khudiakov into a vital seventh spot but he crucially fell with only five minutes left. The Russians repassed and as all three tore thrillingly across the line together, Russia edged out the unlucky Swedes by a single point!

Holland, thanks to fine rides by Kees van der Ven and Gerard Rond, pushed the Belgians back to fourth. Finland snatched fifth from the Brits in a tie-break despite Noyce, appalled at the prospect of being lapped by bitter rival Carlqvist, picking up his pace but critically finishing just behind the indignant Liljegren!

That memorable Sunday night, Noycey drowned his sorrows in a massive prize-giving marquee. Under the sour gaze of ACU officials, Honda's first MX world champion downed a few anarchic beers before we ended up tearing at manic speeds through the local forests in Kent Ohlins' Mercedes truck, a hollering Graham at the wheel, me hapless in the passenger seat, Kent and Bo rolling helplessly around on the floor!

In contrastingly hot and sumptuous weather we reconvened for the 1980 'Trofeo delle Nazioni' at Maggiora in northern Italy when me and MCN's MX correspondent (they had one back then!) Paul Fowler got hopelessly lost circumnavigating Lake Maggiore. Note the crucial difference in spelling – Maggiora was nowhere near Lake Maggiore. But we did enjoy a magnificent lakeside macaroni – my first Italian meal on Italian soil – before finding our hotel late that balmy evening.

This time Great Britain failed to qualify and joined Ireland in the 'B' final come Sunday while Belgium –

boasting all three freshly crowned world champions Harry Everts, Georges Jobe and Andre Malherbe – set about reclaiming their rightful crown.

First blood went to 19-year-old Jobe (Suzuki) who proved his pedigree with a fine first race win ahead of Moiseev, Malherbe on a new water-cooled Honda and Carla, who shouldered his way through from 20th on the opening lap! But it was home nation Italy who were closest to the Belgians with 125 GP starlets Corrado Maddii (Aprilia) and Michele Rinaldi (TGM) finishing sixth and seventh.

Then, in a truly sensational second moto, scaldingly fast local wild man Maurizio Dolce – who had suffered a puncture in race one – hurled his Maico round the hard-baked, high-speed, blue-groove dustbowl to win in front of 35,000 absolutely ecstatic Italians. The rest, headed by Rond and Jobe, were left trailing in La Dolce Vita's wake, though Malherbe made a spirited recovery to grab fourth after a first lap fall. Carlqvist also went down – dislocating a finger – but somehow conquered the agony for his three-man Swedish squad before being ushered off to hospital.

With spirited support from Maddii and Rinaldi, Dolce's Italy ran the Belgians commendably close while Carla's heroism was rewarded with third place for Sweden by a point from San Marino (Italy's B team!) and Holland.

But this was to prove Belgium's 11th and last Trophee des Nations triumph. America was coming and, though we didn't know it then, the event's days were numbered...

Jeremy Lusk ends the
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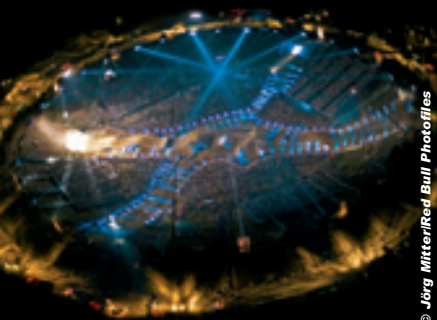
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- 3 Robbie Maddison 320
- 4 Jeremy Lusk 320
- 5 Jeremy Stenberg 235
- 6 Andre Villa 155



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Dany Torres makes up for the heartbreak of missing the cut at his home round in Madrid with victory in Warsaw

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Travis Pastrana makes a one-off appearance to star in the new 'Super Session'



© Jörg Mitter/Red Bull Photofiles

Mat Rebaud celebrates his 2008 Red Bull X-Fighters title flanked by Dany Torres and legendary Aussie long-jumper Robbie Maddison

Dany Torres dries his eyes and makes up for his disappointment in Madrid but it's Swiss star Mat Rebaud who grabs the big prize as the Red Bull X-Fighters series signs off in Warsaw.

The sobbing Spaniard was in tears after missing the cut in the quarter finals in front of his home crowd but two rounds later – watched by a capacity crowd of 35,000 – he's on top of the box and up to second in the final standings.

But despite only ending the evening third – his worst result of the series – in the Stadion X-Lecia in the final event before the historic venue is bulldozed, the crown belongs to Rebaud whose wins in Mexico, America, Spain and Germany meant he had the title in the bag before the trip to Poland.

"Now they can tear down the stadium," says Matt. "That was the ultimate goodbye – there's nothing that could beat that for a final farewell."

Always inventive and innovative, this year's X-Fighters finale features a 'Super Session' which pits four teams of three riders against each other in Step Up, Speed and Style, Quarterpipe Jam and Classic FMX disciplines. And – surprise, surprise – it's freestyle legend Travis Pastrana who flips and whips his way to the win along with Thomas Pages and team leader Ronnie Renner.

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ROMANIACS REVISITED

QUITE POSSIBLY THE MADDEST, BADDEST EVENT ON THE FACE OF THE PLANET, THE RED BULL ROMANIACS IS A FIVE-DAY THRASH THROUGH THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS AND AFTER HIS HEROICS IN '06 AND '07 OUR TECHNICAL EDITOR 'ANGRY' GEOFF WALKER IS BACK FOR THIRDS...

Words by Geoff Walker

There is a time of the year when I start to get a wee bit twitchy. It's a difficult time, a mad time – a time to stand up and join the ever increasing number of mad humans in the trek across Europe to the stunning and crazy land of Romania for the annual festival of pain that is the Red Bull Romaniacs!

For those of you who haven't heard of the Romaniacs, it's an extreme enduro rallye which runs from the streets of the city of Sibiu through the Carpathian mountains for a total of five gruelling days. In 2006 myself and the Sutt Dawg competed in the Expert team class and last year, with an injured Dawg unable to ride, I was forced into the Pro class as an individual and gained a 12th place finish. This year Dawg was missing in action again but his replacement 'Irish' Stu was planted in the Mayor of Neva Rite's battle bus alongside myself and The Spode.

Here's the general plan of how things go in the run up to the event. Collect 300EXC from KTM UK, collect battle bus from Mayor of Neva Rite, collect Michelin tyres from ISO2 Stu, collect positive mental attitude from Keith the Legend, prepare bikes and parts for myself, Factory Jon and Knuckle Sandwich, load bikes into garage of battle bus, wait for Spode and Irish to turn up, wait some more for Spode and Irish to turn up, depart HQ and drive to Romania via France, Belgium, Germany, Austria and Hungary.

Once we arrive in Romania we need to find a place to stay for a couple of days, unload bikes, build bikes, test bikes, walk prologue course, go to the loo, have a beer, regret having a beer, sign on, regret ever coming because of lack of organisation, become happy with being at event again after sign-on is over, try to organise press set up for the team, regret ever coming as ignorance begins to reign supreme and then – finally – become happy again after meeting all the Brits who have made the trek to Romania for the madness!

It was awesome this year as so many Brits had decided to get out there and do the business. With a promise of

tracks suited to each class, the lure of the Romaniacs enticed many heroes to come and pit their skills against some of the most awesome terrain on earth.

First thing as far as riding was concerned was the half-hour practice on the Prologue street course. This gives everyone a chance to test the crazy course and take some time to master the obstacles as generally they always look worse than they are – although sometimes they're worse than they look!

The first couple of minutes of my half-hour practice were almost my last minutes of riding for the event when I tried to jump over a fallen rider's Husaberg and went down like a sack of sh*t. Nice! My elbow and shoulder took the brunt of the contact with concrete but I dusted myself off and rode another couple of laps struggling to hold on before deciding to pack it in and watch for a bit. American trials champ Geoff Aaron was ripping round on the All Wheel Drive Christini KTM and Brits Graham Jarvis and Paul Bolton were on fire on the Prologue course.

The rest of the British Pro class riders were pretty much made up of trials specialists so I was feeling a bit inadequate as my trials experience consists of a Lisburn and District MCC trial on a Montesa twin-shocker when I was about 15 and I came last in that! It still haunts me 20 years later!

The stand-by doctor in the hotel took a look at my elbow hole and decided it needed to be cleaned out Romanian style so he soaked a bit of bandage with some cleaning gear and proceeded to insert his finger INSIDE the cut to clean it out! I was on the point of passing out when I fought him off and took a seat. He was pushing into the wound and I could feel a lump moving around in there and so it seemed could he. Sadistic b*****d!

A quick bandage up and with the mad doc wanting to see me in the morning I told him I was #585 Mr Van Hoodleschmitt and promptly left before he could get any more details and come up with an excuse to throw me out of the race.

The Prologue is the public face of the Romaniacs – what's less well-known are the four days of pain that follow



© Petr Drag Vuckovic/Red Bull Photofiles

DAY 1 – PROLOGUE

The Prologue is undoubtedly the public face of the Red Bull Romaniacs. The pics and vids are world famous but apart from promoting the event it serves a very important purpose – a good Prologue means a good start position for the mountains.

To say I felt nervous would be an understatement and as I looked around it was apparent I wasn't the only rider stressing about making a mistake in the race and going out on the first day. One small error in the Prologue can mean curtains for the event and to top it off the rain had poured down during the night. The Hobby and Expert classes had run with major carnage and major Brit success/entertainment and now it was the turn of the Pro class.

With some Nurofens down my neck and a full ISO2 energy system in me I was a bit shaky but ready to go. Hands on helmets, dead engine start. Flag dropped, BS stopped and it was off to Prologue hell! The #8 machine fired up perfectly and we were off. A mix of logs, tyres, trees, rocks, ramps, concrete, buildings and Tarmac followed and riders were going down big style all over the place. I ran as high as second on the first

lap and traded places with Gerhard Forster on the factory BMW a couple of times. Bolts was off like a scalded cat and no-one was going to touch him. That dude flies!

First lap victims were Kyle Redmond from the USA and pre-race favourite Michel Gau from France. Redmond went out with a separated shoulder and Gau managing to finish with a cracked wrist! Tough luck Frenchie! My race was going okay and I was trying to stay smooth. I got to see quite a lot of the growing legend that is 'Special' Greg Evans as the mad slimline Welshman would rip past me at a serious rate only for me to check the soles of his boots on the next obstacle as he flew over the bars. That boy is entertainment to the max and the crowd loved him!

Towards the end I did notice the first lot of rule 'bending' as riders were simply missing parts of the course out! That is how this event rolls – the rules are made up as the race rolls along and it seems nothing is set in stone. I guess that's part of its charm and sometimes it works in your favour and sometimes against...

The building caused a few problems during the race as there were more entries in the Pro class this year. Every second lap there was a queue for the concrete stairs but it cleared pretty quickly after a bit of pushing and swearing! The '09 300 was running better by the lap and it helped with confidence on the slippery obstacles as I got more used to the bike. At the finish Bolts had taken the win from Forster with Welshmaniac 'Special' Greg taking the final step on the podium. I got to the chequers in 11th place and considering the hole in my elbow I was absolutely pumped with the ride. There were so many Brits filling the results through all the classes it's impossible to name everyone. The top 10 in the Pro class was loaded with trials aces from GB with Graham Jarvis in fourth and Richard Elwood, Mark Jackson and Martin Craven filling eighth, ninth and 10th places!

Other team members Jon Kingston and Jason Ecclestone from the Tenerife 365/Deep Blue Media branch did an awesome job in the Expert single class with safe rides and part-time team member Craig Bounds took to the podium in the same class.



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DAY 2 – INTO THE MOUNTAINS

The first full off-road day was a ripper with awesome climbs and a course laid out to make everyone feel sick right from the off! This is what Romaniacs is all about. They try to break you early in the event and if you don't take your 'A' game to the mountains on day one you'll be punished.

My navigation 'A' game was in play on this first mountain day but my technical hill riding wasn't great. I got halfway through the day and the Toomer was taking a pounding – apparently the #8 machine was running into the top five at times during the morning as navigation was a key and some of the faster guys were getting lost while getting used to the GPS. Just when the old techniques were beginning to return and I was remembering how to use the 300 power to climb better the clutch went into meltdown near the summit of a nice technical climb. I was going nowhere except back down the mountain to try and fix the problem.

At the bottom of the ascent there was a stream so I rolled the bike all the way back down and onto the flat ground by the stream and proceeded to cool the motor down using my lycra 'water carrying' glove which lives in the Kriega bumbag. Tools out and clutch removed, the plates were cooked and the fibre had melted and congealed with the oil. The plates had to go in the stream to cool off and then I had to get a bit 'Ray Mears' on it and started to clean and rough up the frictions using a small stone. This fix together with the removal of the outer pressure shim from the actuating top hat just inside the pressure plate made the bike just about able to gain forward momentum. I tried to get onto the hill again but the clutch slipped straight away.

I had to find an alternative route out of there so it was decision time. Did I go downstream where I had no idea what was round the corner or did I go back upstream where I had come from? The bike made the choice as it wouldn't make it upstream so downstream it was. I had checked my compass and GPS to try to get my bearings and it was a case of trying to find some kind of dirt track or road downstream, always hoping there wasn't a dead end around the next corner.

As it happened, just a couple of kilometres downstream I found a dirt track which led to a larger dirt track which led to some familiar territory. I passed the bottom of the ravine where I had got stuck on the first off-road day in last year's event! I knew from this point it had taken about an hour to ride back to Sibiu with a healthy bike so I was in for a long haul as anything above tickover and the clutch would slip. A couple of hours later I was back at the battle bus waiting for Spode and Irish. Julian Stevens of D3 fame lent me a second-hand clutch and the weapon was back to perfection in no time.

Back in the mountains Graham Jarvis was storming the course and took the lead in the event which was superb and Mark Jackson placed 10th on the day with great ride.

I had used my joker as the 'rules' state you can abandon one day but still return to the race the next day. As it was, the whole day was such a f**k up with people getting lost and GPS tracks apparently not working – only three or four Pros actually made it to the finish of the day – that they decided to allow an extra abandon day.



Chris Birch stays upright across an arse-clenching fallen tree crossing

With its mix of man-made and natural hazards the Romaniacs tests riders to the limit



© Predrag Vuckovic/Red Bull Photofiles

DAY 3 – THE LONGEST DAY

A 6.15am start in the dark and rain of Romania is not ideal but that was how it was gonna be. This day was going to be a grind but the two guys who plotted the course were riders from previous Romaniacs so we were promised good things.

One of the guys was Bondi, a Romanian nutter and a super nice guy. He was the madman whose bike nearly hit me on the steepest downhill of last year's race. Bondi and Simon Crafar made a storming course which we would run on this day and again on the last day but in reverse. The course was tough and had some technical sections, impossible sections and some of the best fast flowing sections of the race.

One of the best things about the race are the people you meet during the hardest sections and a couple of these people popped up in the form of Mike Morris and Gordon Johnston from South Africa – these guys are two of the most friendly people on earth and we buddied up for a few of the vilest parts of the day. Cool blokes and tough men. The day went reasonably smoothly with only a couple of special moments and at the finish of the day I was 24th and running 23rd in the rankings.

At the front of the field Graham Jarvis was leading overall but day three would prove costly for Bolts as the fast man from the north went out with a knee injury.



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DAY 4 NAVIGATION DAY

They told us we were in for a tough navigation day and they were correct. We were climbing high for this day and the weather was the biggest problem. The fog had closed in and we had to ride most of the day blind. I can't really describe how mad the going was as at times you couldn't see past the front fender. It really was that thick!

The speeds were sometimes down to walking pace – even on what would normally be flat-out stuff – and there were times when the fog would clear for just a second and you would be staring at the edge of a cliff. It was mental! The day was gruesome and the weather only lifted with 16km to go.

The guy at the checkpoint told me I only had 30 minutes to get down off the mountain or I was going to time out of the day and that would be me getting close to disqualification so it was on like Donkey Kong and the Toomer sang as we headed off down the mountain, rejuvenated by the fact that I could now see what was approaching. I have to say that too many chances were taken in that half-hour of my life and I can't actually remember ever riding as hard as that before.

With seconds to spare and a three metre waterfall to negotiate before the finish the 300 went into launch mode and I just made it in time by a couple of seconds for 18th on the day. Jarvis was still leading the way and was using the other top runners' navigation to awesome effect by way of being able to follow and sometimes pass on the technical climbs and simply wait for the guys to get going again to lead him towards the finish. Top Man!



© PSamo Vidlic/Red Bull Photofiles

American trials ace Geoff Aaron gets a helping hand – Dougie Lampkin would've cleaned it!

Three days in and Angry Geoff's developing a 1000-yard stare...

DAY 5 – THE FINAL DAY!

The organisers weren't going to make the final day easy and the weather wasn't helping. This would be a tough day as everyone was tired. The day set off okay for me but when I was happily riding along I came across a bit of signage which sent me off track with what I thought to be a P for the Pro class together with an E for Expert.

I reckoned they must be chucking in some unriden surprise naughtiness for us in the morning so off I went to find a fully stressing Crafar talking about an emergency track change! I asked him which way to go because as far as I was concerned he had sent me up this way. He looked at me and said the other Pros went across country to find the road. As it later turned out I shouldn't have been up that trail and I should have apparently carried on along the original track but I went with the sign and managed to lose a load of time while trying to get back on track from the 'emergency' change.

Apart from that section the course was amazing. Dilemma number two was a stranded Richard Elwood on his CR250. Richard's front sprocket bolt had fallen out which caused the front sprocket to come off at high speed! The man was flat-out pinned when it happened so there could have been massive carnage.

The sprocket was wedged into a now broken swingarm and had also imbedded itself into the Honda's aluminium frame as well as breaking the chain in the process. I was pretty happy with the situation as to be honest – I like a challenge and this kind of challenge gets me going. We were in the middle of nowhere with only the most basic of tools and it looked like the only way to get the sprocket out was to take the swingarm off the bike.

Richard told me it was cool to haul ass and leave him there but that wasn't really on the cards as I knew I was going to get to the finish at some time by any means possible even if I was out of time or had to ride all night – the result was immaterial as long as the #8 KTM got to the end of the day. Our tools weren't really man enough to get the job done so plan B needed to be activated – unfortunately we didn't have a plan B! Then I noticed a small wooden shack just down the mountain and I managed to borrow a hammer and couple of metal bars from the old man who lived there.

A lot of grunting and hammer striking went on for a while until the sprocket somehow came out. That was the first problem sorted – now it had to be fixed to the bike but the bolt had gone. Luckily, chemical metal is a great thing and is always present in the Kreiga bum bag. The final driveshaft was okay and the sprocket wasn't bent so with a chunk of chemical metal putty mixed up the sprocket was fitted.

Next stop was the chain. Richard had a link but as we fed the chain back on it was a bit of a blow to realise it had been bent and twisted so a bit of blacksmithing was called for leaving only the guide to straighten before we were able to set off. >>



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Richard and I rode very slowly together until we reached the next checkpoint around 10km away. When we got there Richard abandoned his day and took to the main roads headed for Sibiu and a beer. I took off to continue my race and for a while I was able to push on hard and catch up to the back of the pack. It was cool to see Jon and Jason working together on the tough parts of the course and the Romanians' spirit was strong.

Just when I thought things were starting to go my way disaster struck. The clutch wasn't fading or getting hot but for some reason the lever would lose pressure. I was getting a tad frustrated now and came back down off another mountain to assess the problem. My only choice seemed to be to take to the road and I was able to push and ride the bike to the service point a few kms away.

Angry Ash from the Christini crew was there to meet me and he got the ball rolling with the repair as Spode and Julian took to the 300 and bled the system and changed the oil adding an extra 150ccs to the gearbox. The service points are great as I get to hear tales like Special Greg trashing his bike and Geoff Aaron p**sing in his radiator to stop the bike blowing up – all good stuff and excellent for raising my spirits to get to the end. Everything worked great after the service and it was good to catch up with some British guys who were at the race spectating and having a lot of fun. One of the guys had been dressed as a bear and was jumping out on riders as they struggled up the mountain!

The rest of the day went well and the run in to the finish provided some awesome riding in the loamy wet dirt. This is what it was all about – having fun on the bike and riding to the finish with a smile on my face. I couldn't think about anything else on that run in except getting to the end, that was all that mattered right at that time and I enjoyed the period of intense focus.

As I came out of the trees to the first part of the finish Spode and Irish Stu were there to greet me and I was so focused and drained I couldn't really get my head round reaching the end of the final day. It was simply a matter of riding the 24km back to Sibiu and into the Prologue building for the 'show' finish and it would all be over. I could rest my arm and the rest of my body. I was kind of stunned and overwhelmed with it all.

Spode and Irish were super-pumped and I was happy we could get to the end as a team as everyone involved puts a lot of effort into that final moment. The ride along the road into Sibiu was cold and full of the mad traffic and I was glad to get back and into the building to be signed out of the race. It was over for me and I was pretty emotional on the inside.

It was great to see Jon and Jason at the finish as well as loads of other happy and excited Brits and as we sat down for a moment of celebration at the finish area I almost burst into tears. Big Jessy! I had started the day in 20th position and I was praying as most riders do that I would get away with the off-track section I had to take to get the bike back to service. And it seemed I had until we checked the result for the last day and overall.

Geoff Walker on the #8 KTM was classed as disqualified! That was a bit of a kick in the hairy boys as all the riding was done and we had reached the finish but it's the luck of the draw I suppose. I asked for an explanation and had a reply stating the 'rules' which made me slightly pissed off as we were back to the consistency issue. This race is not only about luck out there on the mountains, it is also about how lucky you are with the circus of 'organisation'.

The rules with this event are pretty simple but there may as well not be any as some are used and some are simply ignored – maybe it will be sorted one day but then maybe it wouldn't be The Romanians...

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RESULTS

PRO CLASS >>

1 Graham Jarvis, 2 Gerhard Forster, 3 Chris Birch, 4 Craig Stone, 5 Geoff Aaron...8 Mark Jackson...10 David Wood, 11 David Myers...16 Martin Craven, 17 Greg Evans

EXPERT SINGLE CLASS >>

1 Oliver Brichard, 2 Mark Delatour, 3 Tommy Kunert, 4 Thomas Leiner, 5 Florian Dietrich...7 Chris Salt...15 James Wood...19 Craig Bounds...27 Jason Ecclestone...31 Jon Kingston

HOBBY CLASS >>

1 Tony Gush/Steve Martin, 2 Michael Deutschbeil/Martin Holler, 3 Tibor Olari/Otto Mircea, 4 Secareanu Ciprian/Rostami Najid, 5 Craig Parkes/Scott Smith...12 Matthew Hall/Tamsin Jones/Paul Green...19 George Dennison/Joe Mitchinson...21 Richard Main/Darren Blagg...24 Jon Pearson/Daz Cowan



Brit Graham Jarvis wins the Romanians at his first attempt – top bombing Grimbo!

CHEERS M'DEARS

ROLL OF HONOUR >>

A massive thanks to everyone involved in making this happen – it really is not possible to complete these awesome adventures without all of you so, in no particular order, I'd like to name-check the following... Spode and Irish Stu, Dirt Bike Rider, kpequie.com, ISO2 nutrition, KTM UK, Deep Blue Media, DEP, KP Equipe Racing, Vault 25, Touratech UK, No Fear Europe, Armadillo Design and Marketing, Three Cross Demolition, Evoke Concepts, Elf Oils, Easton, EB Racing, Spy, SIXSIXONE, Tenerife 365, Kriega, TCX, Michelin, Active Pump Services, Gray Scott electrical contractors, Motosurf, SJD Design, SR-75, Crossing Cottage Crew, Mary Kerr, ACU, Julian Stevens, Jeff Pakosta, Christini crew USA, Boundsy, Mama and Papa (Walker and Spode) and H and TJ.

Geoff's man friends Irish Stu...



...and Spode







ALTERED BEAST!

VIRTUALLY BRAND NEW FROM THE GROUND UP, THE 2009 HONDA CRF450 IS ALMOST AS RADICAL IN DESIGN AS IT IS DOMINANT ON THE TRACK

Words by Suttty Photos by Ray Archer

Since Honda first released its CRF450R to the public in 2002 the red fo-fiddy has annually been the most dominant bike in its class. When I say in its class I don't mean in the MX1 world championship where it's yet to take a world title, I'm talking about in standard-trim, bike-to-bike combat where the CRF has undoubtedly been the best of an admittedly brilliant bunch.

Despite already ruling the roost, rumours had been rife that Honda had something special up its sleeve with its 450F for 2009. Suzuki had upped the ante this year by becoming the first of the major five manufacturers to add Electronic Fuel Injection to its RM-Z450 which meant that Honda would most likely follow suit – which it has along with Kawasaki – but to be fair the EFI is probably the least radical development of all when it comes to Honda's new bike.

Unveiled in early September, the 2009 CRF450 is way different than anyone could have expected. At first glance it's obvious that things are changed and after taking a closer look it's even more apparent that very little is the same. In fact only five parts fitted to the zero-niner were featured on its predecessor and one of those is the front tyre! With an all-new chassis and swingarm, suspension componentry, engine, exhaust and plastics – heck, even the grips are different – the new Honda really is just that.

It would seem that Honda's masterplan for the next stage of MX domination revolves around weight and the placement of it. By centralising the mass of the machine and placing it lower to the ground it is – in theory – able to offer a sweeter handling package that feels lighter and more manageable to the end consumer. Good plan huh?

To help achieve this the Honda engineers must have started with a blank piece of paper because they've pretty much changed the way dirt bikes look. Yeah, there's still a wheel at each end, an engine in the middle, a pair of handlebars and a seat but there are little

changes in design that make big differences.

Take the exhaust for example. A 450 silencer weighs in the region of two-and-a-half kilos and that's quite a lot of mass to have hanging off the rear of the bike, so high up and to one side. The placement of that weight affects the whole bike's handling more than you'd think and that's why the repackable titanium silencer on the '09 CRF is designed to be way further forward from the norm.

To accommodate this change the CRF has a stainless steel front pipe that wraps around the front downtube of the bike – two-stroke stylee – and enters the engine (or should that be exits?) on the front left side of the cylinder rather than the traditional right. While it might look a little odd it sure does the trick.

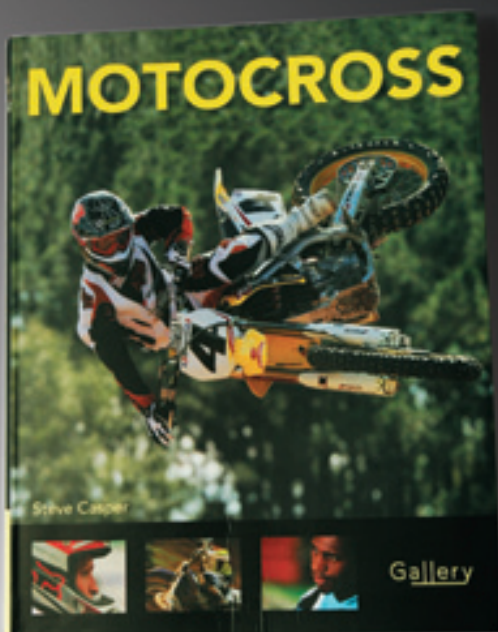
Changing the placement of the silencer means that both the rear subframe and shock absorber are visually way different than before. The subframe's lower mounts are much higher and would interfere with the shock body if the design of that were not radically different – the body of the Kayaba rear shock is much shorter and fatter than ever before.

The fifth generation aluminium frame is slimmer and because it's cast rather than forged is actually almost half-a-kilo lighter than this year's. Other weight saving features include the use of aluminium spoke nipples, reduced axle weight and a reduced capacity fuel cell – 5.7 litre – that's made possible by the use of a very fuel-efficient injection system.

The higher-revving motor has all-new crankcases as well as a new cylinder and piston and a four titanium-valve head while it retains the very clever Unicam valve drivetrain system. The battery-less fuel injection system is fed by an electric fuel pump that sits in the bottom of the fuel cell which also helps centralise the mass.

The all-new plastics finish the aesthetics of the machine off nicely although personally I'd have preferred to have seen all red plastics – and a more pleasing front mudguard – as the white rear end is just a little bit 1997... >>

With its '09 450F Honda has just raised the bar



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Clever weight distribution makes the Honda feel super-light and agile



The track for the test was the Faenza GP circuit used just one day after the final round of the world championship. Overnight rain left the clay surface slightly on the damp side of super tacky but it soon came good.

Out on the track the first thing I noticed about the bike was its weight or rather the lack of it. Weighing in at 106.9kg the CRF is by no means the lightest bike in its class but the way the weight is distributed (with less rotational mass and a lower centre of gravity) makes the CRF feel feathery light – unusual for a 450. One overly used phrase heard at the test was ‘it feels like riding a 250F’ and that pretty much sums it up.

The riding position is nice and neutral and for a six footer like myself felt good. Even the shorter riders on the test liked the general layout – especially the flat seat that extends all the way forward to the fuel cap. The bars are Renthal 971s which have been fitted as standard to CRFs for a few years now.

As well as feeling light the chassis is really responsive and it's easy to make the bike work for you with minimal effort or energy expenditure. The new bike is easy to turn even on flat hardpack corners where the older CRFs would push on horrendously. Changing direction when there are ruts and berms to turn off is easy as pie too which is great news for riders based in the British Isles where tracks are generally quite soft and putty-like.

The all-new Kayaba suspension seems pretty good n'all. After two days of abuse from the world's best motocross riders the surface of the Faenza circuit was rougher than a myriad of Morecambe munters which ensured that the boingers at both ends were tested to the max. With little time to cool off between test rides the fluid in the suspension units must have been almost at boiling point for hours on end but despite that fact and the roughness of the circuit the Kayaba units offered a reasonably good feel for standard settings.

The progressive but plush fork action feels much better than that of the Showas found on the older CRFs. Bottoming was never an issue with the new bike even with my hefty bones onboard and with a little help from the Honda Progressive Steering Damper the front end tracked true throughout the test in all situations – on the gas, on the brakes and everywhere in between.

The rear suspension is a little bit more difficult to judge than the front as the ride height differed greatly from bike to bike. Obviously that's easily adjusted – I'm hearing that when the sag's set between 104 and 108mm the rear end handles even sweeter than Beyonce's – and should be checked and adjusted on a regular basis anyway. Despite the differences in ride height, the rear suspension on the three bikes I rode worked pretty damn well with no harshness or bottoming.

The fuel injected motor seems more usable than ever and it delivers its power in a very smooth and controlled manner. At first the



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SPECIFICATIONS

CRF450 >>

Capacity: 449cc

Bore and stroke: 96mm x 62.1mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Fuel tank capacity: 5.7 litres

Front suspension: Kayaba USD 48mm (310mm travel)

Rear suspension: Kayaba (320mm travel)

Front brake: 240mm disc

Rear brake: 240mm disc

Seat height: 954mm

Wheelbase: 1491mm

Ground clearance: 332mm

Weight: 106.9kg



Even with the Dawg aboard and track that's rougher than a bear's butt the fo-fiddy's new Kayaba boingers soak everything up



combination of the smooth, progressive power delivery and excellent handling traits make you believe that maybe the motor's not so fast but you soon realise just how fast you're going when you enter turns at warp factor one – good job the Nissin brakes are up to scratch!

The motor is undoubtedly helped by the Programmed Fuel Injection (PGM-FI) system that works flawlessly so long as you don't expect it to perform miracles. The processor constantly recalculates how much fuel to finely spray from the injector – that's part of the 50mm throttle body – at any given moment taking into account intake air temperature, throttle position, coolant temperature, air pressure and gear position.

In old school terms this bike is jetted perfectly although the delivery system owes a lot more to

circuitry, wiring and binary than accurately measured holes machined through brass. Like I said it all works flawlessly but that doesn't mean it can do magic tricks like avoid pop-stalls or not bog the motor if you blip the throttle wide-open in fifth when you're travelling at a snail's pace.

One real problem that may or may not be connected to the PGM-FI, although I suspect it is, is the lack of the bike's willingness to start when hot – especially after a pop-stall or crash.

The drill with the old CRFs was easy – find neutral, pull in the hot-start lever, prod the kickstart lever slowly from the top and Robert was your dad's wife's strangely-hot male sibling. However, things don't seem that simple with the hot-start-leverless zero-nine CRF that sometimes won't start until you've steamed up your goggles

and taken a breather break. Meh.

With the wide spread of power the motor produces it's possible to pretty much just use third gear everywhere. But if you enjoy going up and down the box then you'll be pleased to read that shifting through the five-speed box is buttery smooth. The clutch – should you choose to use it – is also a strong performer and remained fade free even when overly abused.

Overall it's safe to say that I like this bike, I like it a lot, even though in some ways it makes riding around a motocross track – the most fun part of our sport – almost too easy. But if you're the kind of rider who likes to eke out every advantage you can then the 2009 CRF450 even with a price tag of £5,199 is probably the bike for you...

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MIND OVER MATTER!

WE ALL FEEL MIXED EMOTIONS WHEN FACED WITH A CHALLENGE – THE TRICK IS TO CHANGE THE NEGATIVES TO POSITIVES...

Words by Neil Drew

Most competitors will be feeling mixed emotions prior to and during an event and it's highly likely they won't actually be able to clearly identify exactly what they are feeling except for labelling their feelings along the lines of 'nervous' or 'excited' or 'confident'. Some will admit to being 'extremely nervous' and won't be able to control this while at the other end of the scale there are those who feel 'very confident'.

The first thing to understand is that whatever we think affects the body by way of a connecting emotion – however there is far more to this than meets the eye. Every single emotion we feel is a signal from our unconscious mind to pay attention to something. For example the competitor who is less experienced and sits at a startline with 30 other guys looking at the first corner may well be feeling anxious, agitated, pessimistic and so on. This is because they are unable to predict what's going to happen so the emotions they are feeling correspond with the mind's inability to have a confident belief that they are going to make the start successfully.

The person that sits on that same startline and has experience and knows that they have the ability to make the start and gain a good position will be feeling different emotions like determination, confidence and optimism.

Now that you understand a little more of the mind/body connection the question is how can you use this to your advantage, control it and change any unproductive emotions into more productive ones that will help you gain results. Again, as we keep saying over and over, this is a very deep and complex subject so the information given here is an overview but in future issues we will address each item separately to help you understand more fully.

Firstly, listen to the labels that you give to things and review them. Let's say that you label a particular event as being 'really hard' – that will set up anxiety because it presupposes that you might not have the skills to do very well. So what would happen if you changed the label to 'it's an exciting venue' or 'I'm going to really enjoy this one'? By changing the label you can go a long way to changing the emotion.

Next you need to really examine the emotions that you attach to the event or the part of the event that creates negative feelings. You can do this by simply

getting a piece of paper and writing down the list of negative emotions that you think you feel. The trick here is to be able to identify exactly what they are whether they be nerves, fear, anxiety or worry. By being able to clearly identify your feelings individually and recognise them for what they are you'll already be halfway there and gaining some degree of control over them.

Now you need to separately score each of these negative emotions out of 10 so if you are, say, really nervous at a start you might put down an eight or nine or 10 depending on just how nervous you feel you are. When you have completed that you will have a much clearer picture in your mind of the connection between negative emotions and results.

Next write down all of the emotions and feelings that you think you should be feeling instead such as confident, determined, focused etc but use your own words rather than these. However, if they work for you then run with them – you can have as many as you want so long as they are positive. Now you need to separately score each of your positive emotions out of 10 so if you think that you want to be more confident at a start you might put down an eight or nine or 10 – whatever level you feel would be right for you. Some competitors feel that, say, a 10 for confidence would be too high so they opt for an eight instead.

When you have completed that you will have a much clearer picture in your mind of the connection between positive emotions and results but, most importantly, you will see very clearly the huge difference between how you currently feel to how you want to feel. And you will also see just how much of an impact on your competition your mind actually has!

Okay, so now you have got something to work with you should also be considering the labels that you have been giving the things we have already talked about. Then we can look at how it is that we can begin to really start to change the items in the negative list to those in the positive list. Again, we need to be a bit scientific about the process and separate it out into sections.

Let's say that you have a 10 for nerves and you want to have an eight for confidence, understanding of course that if your confidence increases then your

nerves will reduce by themselves as a result of increased confidence. Let's also assume for the purposes of this exercise that we are talking specifically about your starts.

You need to ask yourself a series of simple questions – I'm listing five but there may be others that are more appropriate for you.

- 1) What other skills might I want to learn or practice in order for me to become more confident?
- 2) Is my equipment suitable for the purpose and capable of what I want to achieve?
- 3) Do I need to do anything with my equipment to help?
- 4) Have I ever been successful at starts before?
- 5) Do I know what it is like to feel confident?

Let us look at question four for a moment. If you have then all you need to do when you next go to the startline is to remember the time or times that you were successful, run them through in your mind and remember the feelings of confidence. When done enough times this will have the effect of increasing your confidence and reducing any nerves that may be present.

The same can be said for question five. Everyone knows what it's like to feel confident – and it doesn't matter what it is that you feel confident doing so long as you can clearly identify the positive feelings of confidence. Again, all you need to do is run that through your mind to transfer the feelings to the start.

Do this exercise for every emotion on the list. What

DREW WHO?

COMPETITION MIND COACH

Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. At present he is coaching two national champions and several GP competitors and has helped many amateur and professional athletes from all over the world. He can be contacted via DBR or by email at neil@competitionmind.co.uk

you should end up with is a far better understanding of yourself and also of the many things that you can do to change the way you feel. It works far better when you get someone else to ask you the questions because we all have a habit of deceiving ourselves and only writing what we would like to see. So be honest with yourself and anyone else that you choose to help you and you will achieve far more beneficial results which will motivate you more for success and the enjoyment of your sport.

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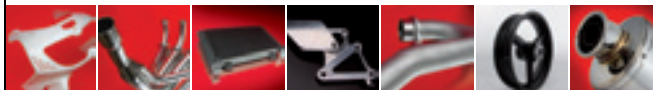
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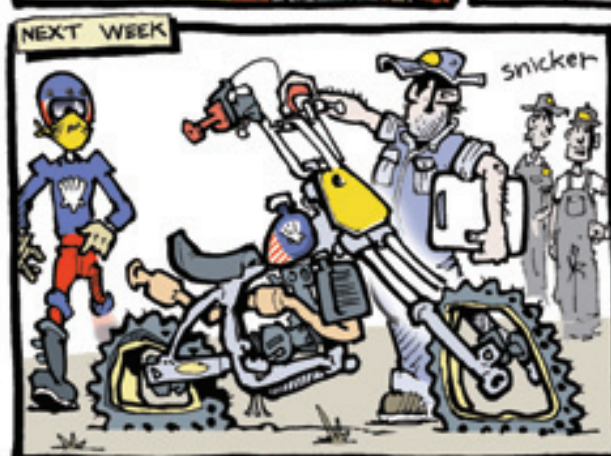
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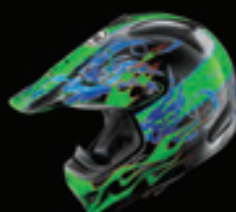
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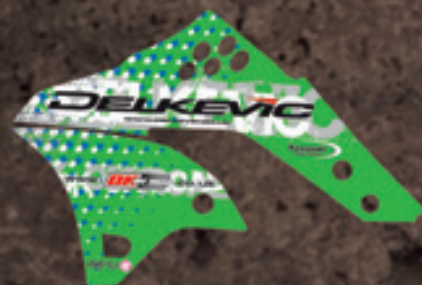
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AMA VS

OUR US EDITOR DRAGS HIS OUT-OF-SHAPE ARSE ACROSS TO HAWKSTONE PARK FOR THE FINAL ROUND OF THE MAXXIS TO CHECK OUT SOME PROPER MX ON A PROPER MX TRACK...

Having had the great fortune to attend a Maxxis ACU British Motocross National – the finale – at one of the most legendary circuits in all of Europe, if not the world, quite a few things stood out as key differences between the British Nationals and the AMA Nationals that I have attended for the better part of the last decade.

For example, the AMA Nationals breed an atmosphere that can be quite hurried and stressful compared to the British equivalent which I found much more laidback.

There are some other key differences and over the next few pages we'll go through them to hopefully give you some perspective.



Maxxis Girls: We have Monster Girls, Muscle Milk Girls and every other kind of 'girls' you can imagine at the AMA Nationals but there was just something about those Maxxis outfits that was very appealing. Maybe it's that they very much remind me of Hooters waitresses back in the USA. Whatever it was, we need some of that in the AMA. On top of that, they looked very smart...

Parade Lap: When the whistle blows while the riders are in the staging area they immediately start their bikes and take off for the parade lap. In the USA they start from their starting spots on the gate and they also seem to take their time leaving for the lap.



TM: You aren't going to find a TM anywhere near an AMA National for a couple of reasons. First off, they don't have a team or any contingency money and, second, they likely don't meet the homologation standards enforced in the AMA where there has to be a certain number available for sale in the USA of that model before it can be raced in the Nationals.



Shade: There aren't any tracks on the AMA circuit with as much shade as Hawkstone has on the track. From one point of view the tracks could use some shade as hot as it gets in the USA. On the other side, though, I bet some of the ruts were hard to see coming in from the sun like the riders were doing at Hawkstone.

ACU!

STATESIDE'S EUROPEAN VACATION

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...



Two-strokes: It was really cool that Billy MacKenzie went out on that CR500 in the second moto. I know that's not typical for a British National but it should be mentioned that it would basically never happen in the AMA. First, regardless of the realities of the bike, the 500cc two-stroke isn't legal in the AMA anymore and they wouldn't let it slide – even for fun. Second, the manufacturer probably wouldn't let it slide, either, as they want to promote bikes that they have for sale today, not six to 10 years ago.

Dry girls: Somehow, the Maxxis Girls were mostly dry after both classes sprayed their respective champagne at the end of the day at Hawkstone. In the AMA both of them would've been absolutely drenched after the first podium and then still have one more to go. Notice the champagne is mainly flying out toward the audience in this photo. In the USA? Not so much.



Personalizing the bikes: Steve Dixon said that Zach Osborne has been blowing up bikes because he rides them at such high RPMs and that he is working with his team to fix the issue to allow Zach to ride like he feels comfortable riding. That wouldn't likely happen in the States unless you were already the established, championship-winning team leader – someone like Ryan Villopoto. Riders in the USA are more likely to be asked to change their riding styles to suit the bikes rather than the other way around. Zach is also running Enzo KYB suspension while his team-mates are running Ohlins.





Pit Presentation: The trucks in the pits had floors down for the teams to work on their bikes, flowers on the tables and more. In the USA there isn't nearly as much effort put into pit displays like that. It was impressive to see.



Atmosphere: As I mentioned in the opening, the atmosphere is much more laidback at the British Nationals. A side-effect of this is the approachability of the riders. The British Nationals are more intimate than the AMA Nationals tend to be. There's also a contingent of children (I'm not reserving that word only for children in the legal sense) at the AMA Nationals who do nothing near the podium after the race other than ask for goggles or jerseys in the loudest, most annoying voices possible. At the British National, the kids were respectful and kind and after the race the riders gave them what they could whereas in the AMA the riders tend to hang onto their equipment maybe even out of spite – and with reason. Funny how that works out.

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Brad gets down with the Brits – try this in the States and you'll be scrapping with security



BEST OF BRITISH!

OUR TAME CANADIAN'S BEEN HANGING OUT AT DONINGTON AND BY AND LARGE HE'S IMPRESSED WITH WHAT HE'S SEEN (JUST DON'T MENTION THE TRACK)...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by RAY ARCHER

Whew! What a whirlwind for myself at the MXdN (remember, I'm NOT calling it 'of' – it's 'des' and will always be 'des' to me)! I just got back and Sean is on my ass to get him a column! So let's get started...

The patriotism I witnessed in England was second to none – the support of your guys was phenomenal. I loved the announcers. Those two guys were comedy, they seemed like a couple of your cool uncles when you were growing up. They called the race like they were in your basement, sitting on a lounge chair. Loved those guys. It never failed with them either, there would be a lull in the race and then one of them would start screaming about Billy Mac, Searle or Simpson and I would look around and just see a rider putt-putting through a corner. They just were screaming to scream it seems. I loved it!

The energy that the crowd put out when Billy MacKenzie was up front in his qualifier on Saturday was unreal. I was getting goose bumps just watching Billy circulate the track. Also, did anyone see the dudes in the pits with the chainsaws and helmets on? In America if you tried that in the paddock you'd be gang-tackled by 800 security guards and thrown in jail! I love GPs for their outright party atmosphere – we just don't see that in the USA. Lawyers and political correctness have put a stop to that kind of shenanigans.

I thought the UK team hauled ass also and Searle proved that he's the real deal. I don't think he's in Ryan Villopoto's league but, then again, who is? He was the second-best MX2 rider and I think the USA fans are going to get a gem over here next year. He looks like a very technical rider, never really getting out of shape or hanging on for dear life. Very precise and looks like the jumping is easy for him as well and that's good because the US tracks have some big leaps.

Billy MacKenzie is more the pin-it-and-pray type of rider, he's fast but a little sketchy. You can tell that he rides with his heart on his sleeve, it seemed like when the crowd was cheering for him full blast he just grabbed some more throttle! It's too bad he crashed in the third moto because UK was in position to grab a podium until that happened. Shaun Simpson kinda came from outta nowhere this year to do pretty well in the GPs and I was impressed with him as well. He rode a 250F against pretty much everyone else's 450 and acquitted himself pretty well. He has a bright future for sure.

The Americans had a rough day but still managed to come away with the win. None of them had it easy like last year at Budds Creek. Stewart showed that he is still the fastest man on the planet but you have to stay upright and he didn't. His crash at the end of the third moto had the USA guys whipping out their calculators. I also saw something that I haven't seen all year in the States and that is James getting passed. Yes, it was amazing to see another rider go around James and pass him – that just does not happen and I give full props to the man who did it, Sebastian Pourcel.

James was not happy about the pass before the rolling sand whoops but from my vantage point it looked aggressive but okay. In fact, it looked like

something an American rider would do! I guess James felt that Sebastian couldn't run the pace the whole moto so why do something like that but I say go for it. Any time you can pass the world's best rider you do it.

Ryan Villopoto was his usual self, he dominated the second moto against 450s and came from waaaaay back to almost catch Searle in the first moto. I guess Ryan felt that the now nicknamed French Missile (Pourcel) also cleaned him out in the opening lap of the first moto. He was not happy but took it out on the track and the rest of the field. It was an electric ride for RV, just pinning it on the 250F, keeping his momentum up and railing the outside of turns. That was his final ride for the Pro Circuit team and he did it up in style.

Tim Ferry was not his usual self and for whatever reason he could not find a groove and struggled all weekend. Trust me, I have watched Red Dog do a million laps at tracks all over the world and you guys did not see Ferry at his best. Still, he got the second gate pick both of his motos which put him midpack on the start and left him fighting uphill. He took what he was dealt and came out pretty good. Unbelievably, he won his class with 9-5 scores – talking to him after the race he really struggled with the track but offered no excuses. His second moto ride was like a pitcher fighting through the innings when he has lost his fastball.

Now, onto the things I didn't like. And for starters I think the track sucked. I know this is the Youthstream way of doing things. You find a good facility like Donington and then build a moto track around that. I will admit the facilities were pretty good – paved pits, nice media room, lots of vending and trucks to grab some fish n chips and also pretty good viewing for the spectators. I think that track suffered for these amenities. This is the age old question facing all promoters – do you go out into the countryside to the historic, gnarly tracks with no facilities or do what they have been doing more and more to attract sponsors and fans? I don't have the answer, maybe there's some middle ground where you can meet at. This track had nothing really challenging, was kind of one-lined and the soil was sketchy.

Team Australia let me down also, they were a shoo-in for a podium spot. Or so I thought anyways. Chad Reed struggled in his debut Suzuki ride – he didn't have bad luck, he didn't get bad starts, he just kind of rode around. I have a lot of respect for Reedy, I seriously think he could've come off the couch and got second in the AMA Nationals this summer. Ah well, he's got a long way to go until Anaheim I suppose. Brett Metcalfe was fast but crashed his way out, this is not something that he normally does but he just couldn't get a handle on the track. Michael Byrne was just okay, he also looked like he wished he was somewhere else.

All in all a great weekend and I appreciate all of you guys that stopped me to say you read my column or watch The Bottom Line show. That made me feel all fuzzy inside. This was my third MXdN and you Brits have nothing to be ashamed about – you did a right proper job!

bike test

How good's the 450?
"Mightily, mightily
impressive" reckons our
tester Geoff Walker



DUCKLING?

THEY USED TO BE, ER, AESTHETICALLY CHALLENGED BUT THE REVOLUTIONARY NEW HUSABERGS NOW HAVE THE LOOKS TO MATCH THEIR SUPER-SWEET PERFORMANCE...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Hertwig Peuker and Gary Freeman

Husaberg make awesome bikes – that is fact – but they have always been an acquired taste. The company think ahead with technical design and most of the time they get it right but sometimes this comes at the cost of aesthetic appearance. Let's be honest, some of the past Bergs have been pretty gruesome to say the least.

But for '09 Husaberg have upped the game once again with two radical and for the first time, in my opinion, sweet-looking vehicles of mass destruction.

Husabergs of the past have always looked massive but felt nice to ride but at first glance in the hotel these bikes ticked the compact and racy boxes straight away. When glancing over the FE450 and FE570 you can see the thought that's gone into the bikes as every part looks honed and placed in the exact position to make a bike with a centralised mass area previously unseen on any off-road bike.

The single overhead cam engine is the most striking part of the bike to look at – I actually had to take a second look to make sure my eyes weren't playing tricks on me. The engineers in Sweden decided that it would be a cracking plan to take a couple of their engines and cut them in half before tilting and welding the top half of the motor at 70 degrees on top of the gearbox. Sounds crude but it certainly works as they found it to have a very positive effect on the handling of the bike. Basically the new engine design – with the crank placed above the gearbox – brings a massive amount of rotating mass towards the centre of gravity of the bike, therefore giving the chassis an awesome amount of balance and ease of movement while in motion.

Another instantly noticeable and radical feature on the Bergs is the move to an all-plastic subframe which holds one of two fuel cells on the bike which are again mounted without compromising weight distribution across the chassis. The air filter is mounted high at the front of the seat and the fuel injection unit works its magic from directly above the cylinder. The Bergs will tackle deep water crossings with no stress as there is no area of induction low on the bikes.

Canada's Shane Cuthbertson recently showed how tough the new FE450 Berg is with a great finish in the Red Bull Romaniacs where the bikes are subject to serious water crossings and general abuse. The bike didn't miss a beat with all the tough stuff Maple Leaf man put it through!

So there we have the radical side of the '09 Husabergs – but how did they perform?

FE570>>

A 570? That's right, a 570! That seems like a big amount of cubes for an enduro bike but with the design of the Husabergs for '09 I was looking forward to the ride on the big beast to see if the Berg men could pull off a miracle and make the big bike feel like a user-friendly woods weapon.

There are no differences between the 450 and 570 in the chassis and general running departments except of course for the obviously larger capacity motor. Would it be a brute? The answer to that is a simple no. The FE570 produces a power which assists its pilot rather than trying to nail 'em to a tree.

Riding this bike, as with its little brother, is effortless in technical going and rapid on the fast going and when I say rapid I mean rapid! It really does do everything very well and at no time would you believe you are on a big bore weapon. As with the 450 all the controls make life easy and the chassis and turning are pretty much equal to the little brother except for the odd over-shoot when travelling at that extra couple of mph into a turn.

This is a big bike with a small feel and it will have many fans throughout the world for its rideability and the fact that you can go down the pub, puff your chest out and let everyone know you ride a 570 in the woods!

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TECH SPEC

FE450 >>

Capacity: 449.3cc
Bore and stroke: 95mm x 63.4mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Keihin EFI
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 985mm
Weight: 114kg

FE570 >>

Capacity: 565.5cc
Bore and stroke: 100mm x 72mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Keihin EFI
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 985mm
Weight: 114.5kg

FE450 >>

When first throwing a leg over the bike you get an instant feeling of a compact bike. Nothing feels big on the new Berg and it sends a signal of 'meaning business' to you as soon as your ass hits the seat.

The seating position is comfortable with the footpegs sitting high for ground clearance. The handlebars are a little low for me but that is personal and would be easily fixed with some 20mm riser blocks. The seat foam is firm and transition from the front to the rear of the seat while riding is easy as it is quite a flat shape.

For the test in Greece we were lucky enough to have a very small part of the '08 ISDE course on which to thrash the bikes. The crew had set up a great loop for the test and every section of it was testing the bike well with a mix of fast, technical and varying surfaces throughout the lap.

The moment you ride off on the 450 there is a feeling of being part of the bike – in short, life becomes a fraction easier. The balance on the bike really is that good! It seems that every part is working to help the rider to go faster in a safer fashion. The motor is super-smooth and delivers absolutely no aggressive punch which could get you into trouble. It seems every pound of torque is hitting the ground through the rear tyre and with every rotation of the wheel, traction is gained and forward motion in all grip types is achieved. I couldn't believe just how easy to ride the fiddly Berg was!

The power delivery feels like a 300 and adds to the balance from the chassis and the bike making the suspension work smoothly across all terrain. There was one fast section of the loop where bottoming occurred but this is acceptable as it means all the suspension travel you pay for is being used! The units will suit a broad spectrum of riding styles and speeds and it would only be the fastest guys who would require a small change in oil height or valving once the correct spring rate is fitted.

All the controls have a quality feel as you would expect and the shifting is silky smooth. The clutch feels strong and positive at the lever and when driving. The cooling system seems to work well on the Berg as we were riding in temperatures in the high thirties and I didn't manage to boil the bike once.

The bike works very well in the woods and the technical crew hooked me up with some data logging on the bike. The wiring is in place from stock on the Bergs for a hook up to a laptop which can alter the fuel injection system to optimise the ride. This is all very technical stuff but when the guys explain the graphs and charts it all becomes pretty clear.

I rode pretty hard for a lap of the test loop after they plugged the box into the bike under the seat. When I finished the lap the crew then removed the seat, whipped the box out and plugged it into the laptop and we were able to analyse my lap through throttle position, fuel flow, air flow and speed. It was awesome to sit down and look through a section of riding time with a computer telling me where the throttle was open and for how long as well as how the bike ran through the lap. Very interesting stuff. The crew use this data a lot during set up and running in the WEC events as well as hours of testing with the pro riders every week. Very cool stuff!

The best was yet to come from the smaller Berg as I had a chance to give it a 20-minute hammer on the small flat grass test track set up for the ISDE riders at the pit area of the race. The bike is simply the easiest thing I've ever ridden across this kind of ground. To make a bold statement I would have to say that this bike without question will make you faster on pretty much any enduro test of this type. The turning at speed is brilliant and the positive feel from both ends of the bike is awesome.

Feedback from the bike is constant while you ride it and the harder you push it the more positive it reacts. It really did take me to another level on this small track. It simply made me push harder and harder but I could not make it misbehave at all. What more can I say? The FE450 is a mightily, mightily impressive vehicle.



On paper at least a 570cc enduro bike sounds a real handful but the Husaberg power's mega user-friendly

KNOCKOUT KINGS!

THE SCRAP FOR 2008 MX1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP HONOURS BOILED DOWN TO A REET BRUISING WAR OF ATTRITION BETWEEN TWO TOUGH GUYS – REIGNING CHAMPION STEVE RAMON AND ITALIAN CHALLENGER DAVID PHILIPPAERTS

Words by **Sutty** and **Adam Wheeler** Photos by **Sutty**

The 2008 MX1 world championship was the most exciting it's been for a good number of years as no fewer than nine riders won a GP – that's nine different riders in only 15 rounds. But while there were plenty who could hold it on long enough to take GP glory only three riders held the red championship leader's plate – Monster Yamaha's David Philippaerts, defending MX1 champ Steve Ramon and his Teku Suzuki team-mate Ken De Dycker.

With De Dycker being consistently inconsistent the fight for supremacy raged between the two-time world champion Ramon and Philippaerts who until this year had been more than a little inconsistent himself.

Here's what went down round by round...

ROUND ONE – NETHERLANDS

Held at Valkenswaard, round one of the series turned out to be super-tough for the riders as heavy rain turned the already deep and technical sandy circuit into a rough and rutty mess.

Ramon's Teku Suzuki team-mate Ken De Dycker took a double race win on the day to lead the world championship for the first time in his life. Ramon meanwhile finished the day in second overall while Philippaerts opened his season score with a fifth after clashing with his Monster Yamaha team-mate Josh Coppins.

Overall winner: Ken De Dycker

Series leader: Ken De Dycker

David Philippaerts – 4-6

"I was happy with my results at Valkenswaard – I had good speed and also a nice feeling on the bike. The first moto was not great because I made some small mistakes and was quite nervous but I was glad to see that I could run at the front. In the second heat I started well but lost a lot of positions by getting blocked in the second corner. When I got through I was physically finished. I was happy with the points I took and I was not far from second place in the championship."

Steve Ramon – 3-4

"I was sick all week with flu and I struggled to concentrate out on the track. I didn't get a good start in the first race and I found it difficult to pass because I couldn't find a good rhythm – I wasn't riding smooth and I was fighting against the track but I still finished third after I passed Philippaerts on the very last jump. The second moto was even worse for me, I was riding badly but I still finished fourth in the race and second overall."

ROUND TWO – SPAIN

Heavy overnight rain turned the Bellpuig circuit into a swamp for Sunday's points-paying race as for the first time since 2001 the Spanish GP was decided over one moto as the track was considered dangerous and the riders decided to strike before race two began. Ramon powered to the win – his first ever MX1 GP victory – while Philippaerts chased home in second.

Overall winner: Steve Ramon

Series leader: Ken De Dycker

David Philippaerts – 2-DNS

"It was quite dangerous out there, the bike would stick in the mud over the jumps and you had to take some risks – having said that I had some fun as I quite like the water! I never expected to finish second after having a bad start and then crashing but the Yamaha is so easy to ride and that was important in those conditions."

Steve Ramon – 1-DNS

"I had a good start and I was running second when Barragan made a mistake in front of me and I took the lead. It was really difficult to ride the track and you had to concentrate hard because there were some really deep bumps and ruts which you couldn't see because of the deep water. My riding was good and I won the moto to win my first MX1 GP."

ROUND THREE – PORTUGAL

One week after the mud of Spain came the baking hot heat of Portugal for a race held on the infamous red dirt of the Crossodromo Agueda. This race marked Philippaerts' first moto win of the season and also the first time he'd take over the world championship lead as the current pace setter Ken De Dycker suffered all day with blisters caused by household cleaning chores! Ramon had a tough day too as the leg cramps – that would become an ongoing problem throughout the year – made their presence felt for the first time.

Overall winner: Sebastien Pourcel

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 1-2

"I was so happy to take the red plate in Portugal. The first moto was unbelievable, my start was pretty average but I passed MacKenzie and Barragan and found some very effective lines. When Sebastien came near in the last moments I looked to pull another second on him and controlled the race until the end."

"I started well in the second moto but it was a long race so I didn't want to go crazy at the beginning because I knew the others would slow their pace by the end and I wanted to be strong for the whole distance. I finally finished second in the race and second overall on the day."

Steve Ramon – 6-4

"This was the race where I started getting leg cramps and that stopped me from being on the podium in Portugal. I finished sixth in race one then I holed out the second moto."

"My riding was going good until my legs started to cramp and I lost concentration and slipped back a few places. Coppins passed me on the last corner when I came in a little fast and drifted wide. It wasn't the best day for me but I did the best I could."

ROUND FOUR – BULGARIA

Philippaerts repeated his results of Portugal on the fast and slick hillside circuit of Sevlievo in Bulgaria to take his first overall win of the season while Ramon suffered with bad starts that kept him from reaching the podium.

Overall winner: David Philippaerts

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 1-2

"I tried to win both races in Bulgaria but I was pretty tired at the end of moto two and I couldn't stop Pourcel from taking the win after Barragan crashed out in front of me. I still took the overall though and I increased my championship lead."

Steve Ramon – 5-3

"My biggest problem in Bulgaria was my starts. I moved from 11th to fifth in moto one despite there being only one good line. Again in the second moto I didn't get a good start but I moved forward and Pourcel only passed me after I clashed with a lapped rider. It was just a pity that I wasn't closer at the starts because my speed was good and I'd have been challenging for the podium or maybe even the win."

ROUND FIVE – ITALY

Mantova was Philippaerts' first of two home GPs and the race that made many people see him as being a true MX1 title contender rather than just someone capable of winning GPs. After crashing at the start of moto one the Italian rider charged through the pack to fifth – importantly passing Ramon along the way – before backing that strong ride up with second in the final moto of the day. Ramon meanwhile struggled to impress in Italy and lost big points to his title rival.

Overall winner: Marc De Reuver

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 5-2

"Someone crashed in front of me at Mantova and then I was hit from behind and I went over a bike that was lying on the ground – it was a big crash and I knew it would be hard to win the GP after that. I tried as hard as I could. I was watching my lap times and I knew they were fast – I set the best lap of the race near the end and that was a good thing."

"In the second moto I pushed to get near to Nagl but it was raining a lot and I did not want to make a mistake. I thought of the points and did not take any risks. I wanted to win but to be on the podium was okay."

Steve Ramon – 6-9

"Overall Mantova was just a bad day for me, I knew it would be a difficult GP for me but I expected to do a little bit better. I didn't get a great start in moto one and I found it hard to pass then I got caught behind Josh for too long which allowed Philippaerts to catch and pass me. The second moto also was just a bad race for me. The track was very wet and slippery but hard underneath which made it very difficult to ride fast."

ROUND SIX – GREAT BRITAIN

The battle of Britain was an epic race as Philippaerts once more battled to fifth from the back of the pack while Ramon who had lead for most of the

>>

special feature

It's the view his rivals got a lot of this season as David Philippaerts motors to the MX1 world title in Faenza



KNOCK



© Sarah Gutierrez

Czecho was the only GP Steve Ramon got to race with the red plate



Philippaerts left South Africa with an 11-point lead



Ramon races to his first MX1 victory in Spain...



Ramon had a race one maximum in the bag until team-mate De Dycker passed him on the last lap at Mallory Park



...but Philippaerts left Portugal with the red series leader's plate

35-minute plus two lap moto succumbed to pressure on the last lap and lost out on almost certain victory to his Teka team-mate De Dycker who'd also been involved in the pile-up that claimed David. Moto two saw DP finish third while Ramon floundered to seventh as agonising cramps crippled his body once more.

Overall winner: Jon Barragan

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 5-3

"Mallory Park was a little bit like Mantova for me! I crashed in the first corner and then pushed hard to come back. I had some pain from my ribcage in the second race and took things a little easier. I got faster with each lap but I only passed two riders – MacKenzie and Ramon."

Steve Ramon – 2-7

"I should have taken points back on Philippaerts in Britain but it wasn't possible. I worked my way to the front of moto one but Ken caught and passed me on the last lap. The second race started well and I was running a good pace but after 15 minutes I started getting cramps and it was just not possible to ride at 100 per cent."

ROUND SEVEN – FRANCE

The fast hillside circuit of St Jean d'Angely is not the sort of place where you want to be crashing as the stony hardpack surface has a tendency to rip body parts to pieces but that's exactly what both Ramon and Philippaerts did in race one. Philippaerts was first to crack as he crashed out of third on lap two. Ramon meanwhile had a massive lead after four laps and it looked like the race was as good as his until he hit a rock and ricocheted from the racetrack. The pair would finally finish 13th and 11th.

Ramon rode to a steady third in moto two as his cramps once more stopped him from putting in a strong second race but Philippaerts had it much worse. While passing Clement Desalle for sixth the pair collided and went down hard. Philippaerts' footpeg was sheared from his bike and despite trying to ride out the moto the writing was on the wall and a DNF inevitable.

Overall winner: Sebastien Pourcel

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 13-DNF

"I had a big crash in race one and to finish 13th was not ideal but I was lucky to finish at all after banging my head so hard. I was fortunate that Ramon also crashed.

"I wanted to see what points I could get in the second moto and I took a painkiller. I did not have the best start but then I started to ride very well, very smooth and with good lines. I reached sixth and then passed Desalle but he did something crazy and rammed into the back of me – it was a big collision. The right footrest had gone and I tried to keep riding but once or twice I touched the ground with my foot and it was getting to be too risky so I pulled out."

Steve Ramon – 11-3

"I was riding well and in the first race I took the holeshot and I was pulling away, things were going really well until I hit a big stone and bounced off the track. It was a big crash and it was very difficult to finish the moto.

"I was looking forward to the second race and I was able to take the holeshot. Pourcel passed me but I was able to follow him without pushing myself too hard but then I made a mistake in the sand section and I almost went down. I put my foot down to steady myself and after that I had those big cramps again."

ROUND EIGHT – GERMANY

With the gap down to six points the red plate was almost within reach for Ramon and after race one of the German GP at Teutschenthal the gap was down to four. But before the Belgian could capitalise he had a massive first lap crash in moto two that also collected the KTM's of Barragan, Marcus Schiffer and Kornel Nemeth. With the factory Suzuki being super twisted, Ramon's ride back to 17th was a lot more impressive

than it sounds. DP meanwhile secured sixth in that second moto to eke out a lead once more.

Overall winner: Josh Coppins

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 3-6

"I had some discomfort before this GP with my sore ribs and I think I made it worse in the race so I settled for scoring points rather than push too hard because I knew I could not increase my speed."

Steve Ramon – 2-18

"The first race was okay, I got a bad start but I was able to pass some riders in the beginning, I had a good pace going and I could see Josh just ahead of me but I was happy with second.

"In the second moto I crashed on one of the jumps – it was wet and slippery and I took the wrong rut and went sideways over the jump. It wasn't really a big crash but some riders were coming behind me and they jumped on my bike and it was completely damaged. I had to stop in the pits to try and straighten it out. From that point my riding was not so good because everything was bent. I tried to take as many points as possible but they just weren't enough."

ROUND NINE – SWEDEN

Rain turned the Swedish GP into a bit of a snoozer when overnight showers left the Uddevalla circuit slick and one-lined. Our pair of protagonists had a consistent day with Ramon twice finishing third with Philippaerts fourth in both encounters.

Overall winner: Jon Barragan

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 4-4

"I was very happy to be back on the podium. Physically I had some problems with my hand and my ribs so I chose to ride a smart race. I tried in both races to pass Steve but there was only really one line."

Steve Ramon – 3-3

"Sweden was good for me because I beat Philippaerts in both races. In the first race he caught me and tried to come by but I rode defensively and held him back. In moto two I was ahead of him and settled for third place rather than pushing further forward in the slippery conditions and maybe crashing."

ROUND 10 – SOUTH AFRICA

It was a long way down to Nelspruit in South Africa and both Ramon and Philippaerts struggled in moto two after running first and second in the opener. While Ramon was sick some travel induced tiredness caught up with the Italian with the result being that he finished sixth while Ramon slipped to eighth.

Overall winner: Jon Barragan

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 2-6

"I missed the podium by just one point. I was already a bit tired early in the second moto and when the sun started going down it was hard to find the lines. There were so many lapped riders that it was very difficult and I did not want to crash. I was glad to leave South Africa with an 11-point lead knowing that the sand race of Lommel was coming up."

Steve Ramon – 1-8

"I was able to control the race from the front and I was really happy to win even though Philippaerts got through to second. Between races I was sick, I didn't feel well in my stomach and I knew the second race was going to be difficult. It was a bad race for me and a real pity that I could only finish eighth."

ROUND 11 – BELGIUM

The deep sand of Lommel physically destroyed the world's best motocross racers during a pair of gruelling motos. Philippaerts had a 11-point gap over Ramon before moto one but lost all of that and more when he tangled with De Dycker and could only then come back

to 15th. Ramon powered to fourth and took the series lead for the first time in 2008.

Moto two would decide who wore the red plate in Loket. Amazingly the kind of drama normally only seen in bad movies was played out in the second race as Ramon and Philippaerts fought hard over fifth. DP gave the position away when he crashed near the end of the moto but Ramon dropped it two corners later allowing the Italian to regain the lost ground – they wouldn't be more than two seconds apart for the rest of the race with the Suzuki star coming out on top.

Overall winner: Jon Barragan

Series leader: Steve Ramon

David Philippaerts – 15-6

"That was a hard day! The track was unbelievable and I crashed too much – for me it was the hardest track of them all. In the first moto I changed my line in a corner and De Dycker came across and hit my front wheel. There was no time to react. I was so tired in the second race that I could not save the bike when the front wheel started to go. I slipped to second in the championship but it was more or less the same and there were still four GPs to go."

Steve Ramon – 4-5

"I took a good start in moto one and I was riding well until I crashed. After that it was difficult to get my speed and rhythm back especially with the track being so rough. I was happy to finish the race fourth and yeah it was good to take the series lead. I knew race two was going to be tough because of how rough the circuit looked on the sighting lap.

"I got another good start but I crashed. I got going again and I could see Philippaerts in front of me and I knew it was important for me to get by him. Luckily for me he crashed but then two corners later I hit neutral going into a corner and stalled the motor. It took a long time to start the engine again because my legs were tired but I managed to get going just ahead of Philippaerts to extend my new lead in the championship – that felt good."

ROUND 12 – CZECH REPUBLIC

Ramon entered Loket with the red plate but a highly motivated Philippaerts drew level on points after race one and pulled well clear after the second moto of the day as he took overall victory on the twisting hardpack circuit that's very similar to many found in Italy. Ramon tried hard but two fourths just wouldn't cut it as DP was just that bit better.

Overall winner: David Philippaerts

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 3-1

"Loket was a great win for me and it came at a good time. I pushed really hard in that first moto after a stupid crash and passed many riders – I found some good lines and then just went for it. My goal was to at least catch Ramon but I found I could keep going and the top three was possible. In the second moto I took one or two risks but then was able to make good lap times when I was in the lead and had a great race."

Steve Ramon – 4-4

"Loket was a difficult race for me as it's not my favourite track. Race one was okay and I was riding well. I found myself right on the tail of Pourcel on the last lap, we were two corners from the finish and I was on the inside and I knew Philippaerts was in front of me and that I needed to make the pass so I kept the throttle on and made it happen.

"Race two wasn't as good and I started getting a little bit tired in my legs in the middle part of the moto but I had to keep pushing hard. To finish fourth twice on this track was good because I knew it would be a difficult GP for me."

ROUND 13 – IRELAND

A new circuit in Dublin disappointed the riders who had travelled to Ireland for the 13th round of the series. Philippaerts had a consistent day – twice finishing >>

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Ramon contemplates a missed opportunity at Lierop



Philippaerts focuses before race two in Germany

TALE OF THE TAPE!

Name: Steve Ramon

DoB: 29/12/79

Height: 183cm

Weight: 74kg

Bike: Teka Suzuki RM-Z450

World titles: 2003 125cc world champion, 2007 MX1 world champion

Favourite drink: Cola

Favourite food: Pasta

Name: David Philippaerts

DoB: 07/12/83

Height: 180cm

Weight: 74kg

Bike: Monster Yamaha YZF450

World title: 2008 MX1 world champion

Favourite drink: Water

Favourite food: Pasta

fourth – but lost points to Ramon who pushed forward to the runner-up spot in moto two to close the points gap to just five with only two rounds remaining!

Overall winner: Tanel Leok

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 4-4

"Fourth overall meant that it was not a great day but generally I was content because the track was difficult and it was easy to make a mistake that would cost so much."

Steve Ramon – 5-2

"I wasn't happy with my first race in Ireland – I spent a long time sat behind Billy then I started to get a little bit of arm pump and Philippaerts was able to pass me. The second race in Ireland wasn't so bad for me, I finished second after we changed some settings on the bike and so I beat David overall."

ROUND 14 – BENELUX

Lierop is considered by many to be the toughest sand track in the world which meant that the championship had to fall in the favour of Ramon at the penultimate round, right? Wrong! Philippaerts delivered a killer blow to the Belgian rider by running top five in both races while the Suzuki rider struggled to find his rhythm.

Instead of leaving the Netherlands with the 10-point lead in the championship many expected him to, the reigning champ dropped further behind the Italian in the

series standings meaning DP would enter the final round of the championship – his second home GP of the year in Italy – with a 14-point lead.

Overall winner: Marc De Reuver

Series leader: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 3-5

"I finished third in the first moto and for an Italian at Lierop I did not think that was bad at all! In the second moto I looked for the victory but pushed a bit too hard and felt tired at the finish. I had some close moments out there and I tried my best, aware that anything can happen. I was really happy with that GP."

Steve Ramon – 7-8

"I was close in points coming into Lierop but I just blew it there. I had a really bad day and instead of coming away with the red plate and a good points lead I lost a lot of points to Philippaerts."

ROUND 15 – CITTA DI FAENZA

The final round of the series at Faenza could have been a classic as the technical circuit just south of Bologna was more technical than ever due to rain in the days leading up to the event. Already a long way behind in points Ramon seemed to choke in moto one while Philippaerts finished third which meant the Yamaha star only needed to finish 18th in race two to seal the deal – if Ramon won!

Steve started much stronger in the second race and

in his last moto as the reigning MX1 champion gave it is all to go out on top but there'd be no stopping Max Nagl! Philippaerts meanwhile did what he had to do and came home inside the top 10 to claim the 2008 MX1 world championship title!

Overall winner: Max Nagl

Champion: David Philippaerts

David Philippaerts – 3-9

"It was a long, long year and I was so happy to take the title. I wanted to take decent points at every GP and I only really believed that the title was in my grasp during that second moto. I had looked at Steve's season in 2007 and I knew that consistency was the key to the title. I am pleased for the team, Yamaha, Michele and my sponsors. I also want to say a big thank you to my girlfriend Alice. I am happy and it was so emotional to win the championship in Italy and in front of those fans!"

Steve Ramon – 11-2

"I always start every season wanting to be world champion but the way things worked out meant that I started Faenza knowing that it would be difficult to take the title again. In the first moto I didn't have such a good race and then I knew it was definitely over.

"It has been a long season with many ups and downs, I made some big mistakes this year and you have to be there every GP or else it costs you the title – Philippaerts was consistent and he deserved to win."

RAGING BULL

HE'S THE RENEGADE WHO WON MORE MX1 GPS THAN ANYBODY ELSE THIS YEAR AND ALSO THE RAGING BULL WHO DECLINES TO CONFORM TO THE KTM SYSTEM YET HAS BROUGHT THEM THEIR MOST SUCCESS EVER IN THE PREMIER CLASS – HE IS JONATHAN BARRAGAN!

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

Don't get me wrong, the 23-year-old from Madrid is one of the more mild-mannered personalities in the paddock, not one to shout his mouth off or one to plant his rivals in the fence. He is supremely fit, lightning out of the gate and breathtakingly fast for the full 40 minutes.

Yet he was dropped from the KTM factory squad last winter and will remain in the Silver Action satellite team in 2009. So what was the deal at Mattighofen which saw the Spaniard, with a year still to run on his contract, moved out of the factory ranks at the end of '07 after finishing 10th in the world?

"I wasn't satisfied with my performance in 2007 either. It was not a good year, the results were not as good as I wanted. We tried to find another solution and I think doing it like this is a good way. Last year we had some problems. The vision of Stefan and the vision of Barragan did not fit together – we were not headed in the same way.

"The year was a catastrophe. I didn't enjoy the bike, it wasn't as good as this year's bike but the bike was not the problem. The way the team was organised was no good for me. We were four riders and four riders are not the same – everyone is a little different. We cannot all do the same things.

"I needed different training to Philippaerts – perhaps I need to run 20 minutes, Philippaerts 30 and I have to eat at 10 o'clock. That is what I have always done, I have done that for 23 years and it's too late to change that now. It's okay to be together a little but we can't all do the same, we are not at school anymore!"

The tension between team management and riders was not helping anyone and something had to give. Jonathan moved out of the factory rig, Everts got to run the ship his way and KTM had their best ever season from both camps.

"It's okay with Stefan now, normal. We are not friends but we are not enemies and we have come to accept that we do things differently."

The '08 season has been a rollercoaster year for the rugged Spaniard though he was hardly alone in this among the MX1 elite.

"I was starting for a different team and we had some technical problems at the start of the year. I don't know where the fault lay but we made some mistakes and that cost me many points early in the season.

"I had the full factory bike – same as Nagl – from the beginning of the year but there was confusion because the mechanics

did not know the factory bike and I had many DNFs in the Spanish championship. I still had problems at Valkenswaard and again at Bellpuig where I was leading until the engine stopped.

"After that they brought the engine from the factory and fitted it into my bike – I get a new engine every race. My contact to the factory week-in, week-out for engines is Sepp Sperl – we speak a lot together and I need him for winning. And I also have good contact with Pit Beirer."

But no-one should imagine that Silver Action just put on the stickers. "No, my mechanic Marco Madaschi and I found a good solution for the handling straight away. It's a good team and we work well together."

The season had opened with Jonathan on the top of his game. "I won three heats out of four at Mantova in February so that proves I was already fit but then I had some problems with my hand and couldn't train on the bike during the week for a long time. Even at round three in Portugal I still hadn't found my rhythm again after missing so much training."

Jonathan languished seventh in the table – already 48 points off the pace – but a fortnight later in Bulgaria he started to turn things around. "Yes, the riding was good but I have bad memories of that race. It should have been my first GP win but on the last lap I started to feel the pressure. So many people in Spain had said that I couldn't win GPs and I was thinking about that instead of racing. But I've won four times now and I proved I can do it!"

Back at Mantova his luck turned again – "I was fast but I came together with Philippaerts in the start and in the second heat I made a big crash" – and then it was Mallory, his first GP victory.

"In England I also crashed on the last lap but still won the GP. I don't worry about it now, I don't care if I crash as long as I win but after Bulgaria the pressure was even greater and I made another small mistake.

"I didn't actually know I had won the GP in England when I crossed the line. With third and first you don't automatically win and the team did not board me. I guess they thought it would make me nervous. It was my father and my cousin who came and told me after I crossed the line."

Not even a first turn crash could prevent another podium in France but Germany was just one long tale of woe. "I crashed already on Saturday on the last lap of qualification. That should have been my fast lap so I didn't get a good gate and that is so important there. And in the second race

Steve Ramon crashed right in front of me, my bike was damaged and I couldn't continue. It wasn't my fault but that's racing."

With the season now into the second half Jonathan was a distant sixth – 74 off the pace – but July was the month when he took command with a hat-trick on vastly different tracks in Sweden, South Africa and Belgium.

"I knew from the beginning of the year that I was fast. I also know that I am one of the fittest. Some tracks are good for me, some not. I think I can say that I expected to be strong in Sweden and South Africa but to win in Lommel against the Dutch and the Belgians was incredible.

"And after I won those three GPs in a row I don't have a problem with nerves anymore. Now I can take the pressure and can push until the last lap. If I lose, I lose, if I win, I win – I'm not going to get stressed about it!"

One of the secrets of the KTM success – their nine moto win tally is more than any of the Japanese firms – is their strength out of the gate.

"Yes, this is one of the really good things. The bike is running very well this year and the starts are perfect – when you make the holeshot the others have to pass you to win.

"We have a new engine this year and it was strong from the first race. I never rode it until the week before Mantova in February and I saw straight away that there was a big difference. The engine is so strong at the start but it is also nice to ride during the race.

"Last year it wasn't quite right and we had to push with the bike, this year you can play more with it. Of course we win at some parts of the track and we lose at others but I think we have a good package. The tracks where we still had problems are the slick ones with no traction – they were still difficult."

Having closed the gap to the red plate to just 31 with four GPs to run, Jonathan was the man on a roll and he edged closer to the lead after the first moto at Loket even though he surrendered the win to fellow KTM rider Max Nagl. Could KTM – already certain of the MX2 crown – add MX1 a year before schedule?

The answer was no after one of those moments which defy the trend. "I was a little short on a tabletop and my bike pushed me but I didn't expect to crash. And it was a big crash, I was lucky that I could get back on so quickly but then I needed a few laps to settle down before I could push back to fifth in the moto and save the podium again."

profile

Jonathan Barragan won more MX1 GPs than any other rider in '08 but crashes cost him a top three finish





Pit feels the decision to switch Jonathan back to Silver Action paid off

© Ray Archer

BEIRER ON BARRAGAN

KTM'S OFF-ROAD DIRECTOR TALKS ABOUT THE SPEEDY SPANIARD

"Switching Jonathan to Silver Action was not a demotion. He simply did not fit into the structure of the factory team – his independent spirit brought disorder in the system so that it no longer worked.

"He has received full material support this year, he has a good team around him, a good mechanic and he still has just the same technical support of the engine and suspension staff as he had in the factory team.

"And he is free to organise his own life and training. I don't care if he turns up a day late for everything else, just so long as he knows what time the races start on Sunday and continues to deliver such superb results.

"I don't think we need to answer to anybody for our decision to move Jonathan to Silver Action because everyone can see that it works."



Lining up a pass on Billy Mac



Barragan feels at home in his Italian team

Still the series was open but the first turn in Ireland ended all title hopes and a second moto crash at Lierop put a medal out of reach after another exhibition of strength in moto one as he finished second to the dominant De Reuver.

"I tried to be champion but it was always going to be difficult and so much can happen. In the end it did but I won more GPs than anyone else."

Already in Ireland the Spaniard had agreed terms for another year with KTM and Silver Action.

"Some other offers were very interesting and I had to listen – I am a professional motocrosser and the career is short. I don't want to talk about the other offers but no-one else could offer me the complete package and I wanted to stay with KTM. We have had so much success together this year so why change?"

And there was never any doubt in Jonathan's mind that he wanted to stay with Silver Action if he was racing orange.

"I had never been in an Italian team before but I enjoy it here. The character is the same as the Spanish. It's more fun to be here and I have my freedom.

"I don't have any new sponsors at the

moment but many more people in Spain have become interested in MX since I won three GPs and I get much more publicity. For sure if anyone wants to back me next year it is easier to integrate them here at Silver Action than if I was in the factory squad."

Jonathan has come a long way in the three years since he joined the official KTM MX1 squad as the third wheel to Pichon and Tortelli but ended the season as the saviour once the French superstars had self-ignited. "I think it was better for me to come to the KTM factory team as the third rider – there was not so much pressure. Now it would be okay but I was young then.

"But it was a good year for me with Georges Jobe. It was not yet a fully-developed factory bike and we had to develop it – I had a good relationship with Georges. I don't see him so much at the races after his accident in the winter but we still speak with each other quite often by phone. Georges is so strong mentally and he knows me. It was the same with Philippaerts."

David has already gone on to the title of course and who would bet against Jonathan – 18 months the junior – also racing at the sharp end next year?

profile

The Spaniard is a genuine
MX1 title contender in '09



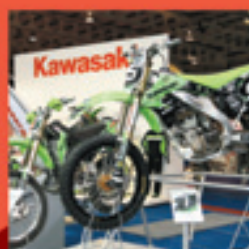
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SUBLIME!

KAWASAKI HAVE A PAIR OF LUSCIOUS LIME GREEN LOVELIES LINED UP FOR 2009 SO WE SENT TONY MARSHALL TO RIDE AND RATE THEM

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Redeye and Hertwig Peuker

The Kawasaki KX250F and KX450Fs are all-new models for 2009 and while there's nothing radically different on these bikes – when compared to something like the new Honda CRF450 – they're still a little bit special.

The comprehensively redesigned 450 now comes equipped with a fuel injected engine, a new frame and new plastics – it's claimed to be sleeker, faster and more high-tech than ever. Even though it's gone through many changes it's still quite obviously similar to the KX450Fs that have hit showroom floors since the model's inception in 2006.

One of the best things about the fuel injection system is that it does away with the need to adjust jetting and for the average end user that's a godsend. The battery-less system feeds fuel to the motor through a 43mm throttle body that also holds the ultra-fine atomizing injector – sounds impressive don't it?

The electronic fuel injection system is specifically designed for motocross and the fuel is fed to the injector from an in-tank electric fuel pump that not only does the job of feeding the injector but also eliminates the need for a gas tap so I guess you'll have to find something else to fiddle with on the start line. The pump is powered by a generator that only creates power when the engine is turned over – either by the kickstart or under normal running – and there's no fuel flow when the motor is inactive.

The EFI system's increased electrical needs are handled by a new larger AC generator rotor that increases the engine's rotational inertia. This helps create a crankshaft balance factor of close to 60 per cent which is close to that found on the Kawasaki factory race bikes that were used in 2008 by Sebastien Pourcel and Tanel Leok. The end result of a well balanced crank is reduced engine vibration, smoother power delivery and a noticeable improvement in low rpm throttle response.

The new engine is also more compact and lighter than before with a 5mm shorter cylinderhead that also has revised intake and exhaust ports for better performance through the entire rpm range. A new piston raises the engine's compression ratio and works in harmony with the new one-piece titanium exhaust pipe.

In theory all this should mean that the KX450F power is delivered in a smooth, user-friendly manner with linear power being created right through the range.

The Kawasaki technicians worked hard to help place the broad power the motor produces onto the ground to increase drive out of corners. Lighter handling and a slimmer chassis was another goal and to achieve these aims every part of the chassis was examined and revised. Clever use of forged, extruded and cast frame parts and its revised dimensions mean almost a whole kilo is lost in weight from the frame.

The KX450F's suspension is designed to compliment the new lighter chassis out on the track too. A Diamond-Like Carbon coating on the fork tubes reduces stiction and that should improve fork response over bumps and especially during cornering. Reducing the fork offset from 24 to 23mm should also help make turning easier – especially on flat, hardpack corners where 450s have a tendency to push on.

The Kayaba rear shock receives a new body design and a larger 50mm piston. It also features a Kashima Coat treatment on the shock internals which should make them slipperier than seven sexed-up sea lions.

Looks wise the zero-niner is much sweeter than before with sleek new bodywork styling in that familiar lime green colour that Rod Hull favoured when it came to Jelly. Like on the '08 bikes the new models both have the correct colour of plastic for the number plate panels – black on the 250 and white on the 450 – which means there's no need to buy bling backgrounds if you really don't want to. Not that anybody is really that tight, are they?

Out on the track it's really obvious that Kawasaki have concentrated hard on changing the way the 450 delivers its power. The fuel injection seems to help with this and it's something I first pondered after riding the 2008 RM-Z450 that was the first bike to have EFI as standard. Kawasaki seems to have perfected what Suzuki started as this 450 is very smooth which makes it very rideable. I'm always a little bit cautious when riding a new bike but after a while I really started to get into it and it wasn't long before I was loving the way the motor produced its power and pulled on this hard hillside track.

>>



Urban warrior? Kawasaki's '09 450F combines sleek good looks with a powerful performance





While there is undoubtedly plenty of power I never felt like I was fighting with the bike. There were times where it felt slow but it's not, it's just that the power there is comes in so smoothly. In my opinion this is what helps make the bike feel so good and makes it so buyable because it's actually a pleasure to ride.

If you're thinking that you want something more beefy and frighteningly fast then fear not. Kawasaki have something called the KX FI Calibration Unit available which allows you to manipulate the digital mapping of the fuel and ignition system to change the way in which the motor produces power. That sort of technology has always been more Moto GP than motocross but you can guarantee that we'll see plenty of laptops plugged into KX450Fs at club meetings next season.

Personally I'd save my money and not splash out on the kit. If you do want to change the power delivery your friendly local Team Green dealer should be able to do it quickly and efficiently in their workshop.

I rode with the settings changed and boy did it make a difference. In fact I hadn't even got back on the track before I could feel it. The power delivery was much sharper but it took the fun out of riding the bike again – or possibly increased it depending on how you like to be pleased by your dirt bike. This setting would be better in the sand but not on this hard stuff.

The suspension on the 450 is supplied by Kayaba and I was getting a real harsh feeling on the rear which was making me come off the gas early coming down the hills into the small braking bumps. I was thinking that it needed to be softer but I was wrong!

The rear shock was working too far down in its stroke so I was using the mid part of the travel where it begins to progressively stiffen when it should have been working more in the top part of its stroke. So we went a few clicks harder and after that I was on the gas down that hill not feeling a thing.

But this did make the bike feel like it was riding high at the rear – for a midge like myself – and my legs were finding it hard to reach the ground. All I needed to do was to rip the seat cover off and hack away at the seat foam and I would have been right at home. This was something I did as a kid and wish I'd done more of in my pro years of riding.

The front forks work well soaking up all the bumps and hard landings with ease. Even though the rear felt high after I had stiffened the shock absorber the bike performed perfectly handling wise and turning it felt more like a 250. Overall the 450 is a sweet handling bike that delivers its power smoothly making it a great bike for all open class fans.

As well as making a mean 450F, Kawasaki came up trumps with their new 250 too. Dominant in American competition for the last few years the KX250F is pretty much all-new for '09. For starters it looks better and Kawasaki claim it's lighter handling and has even more power – something that's very important in the MX2 class.

The motor features a new cylinderhead that has more resilient titanium valves for a longer service life. Kawasaki also claim that the new factory-level crankshaft balance and the tapered titanium exhaust pipe should offer smoother and more impressive power delivery and a noticeable improvement in low rpm throttle response.

An increase in power also means an increase in running temperatures so the engine coolant capacity has been increased with larger radiators fitted. >>

Tony gets ready to put the 450's Kayaba suspension to the test



SPECIFICATIONS

KX450F >>

Capacity:	449cc
Bore and stroke:	96mm x 62.1mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Fuel tank capacity:	Seven litres
Front suspension:	Kayaba USD 48mm (315mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Kayaba (315mm travel)
Front brake:	250mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Seat height:	965mm
Wheelbase:	1480mm
Ground clearance:	340mm
Weight:	112.1kg



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This will undoubtedly help keep the Kawasaki cooler.

Transmission durability has also been boosted with the use of stronger gears. By switching to a new ratchet drive shift mechanism and integrating the clutch cable holder into the crankcase Kawasaki's engineers were able to offer better shifting and clutch lever feel – or so they say.

Like it's big brother the 250 uses a blend of forged, extruded and cast parts in its new frame and is much lighter than the 2008 model – one kilo lighter. A new rear Showa shock is claimed to offer better response, improved bottoming performance and ride feel. The front forks are 49mm Showas with ultra-hard titanium coated tubes to decrease stiction and also day-to-day damage like dings and scratches. New plastics, a new skidplate and new wider 50mm footpegs pretty much round out the changes...

On the track it didn't take long before I was taking a liking to this bike, the track was a bit damp for the first session but I could feel the motor was stronger than the '08 even when the rear wheel wasn't getting the grip I was looking for.

I felt like I was struggling with the front end as it wanted to push away from me but the ground conditions weren't helping and neither was the sag setting as the bike was riding a bit low in the rear. With the track starting to dry out for my second session and the rear end set right I was starting to feel right at home.

The power was so strong and sharp off the bottom that coming out of the turns it was catching me out at times with the front wanting to lift too much. Mid-range power was also good with immediate response if and when needed. The track had lots of jumps and there were times where I misjudged them and over jumped landing on the flat. This is never nice but luckily the motor always reacted with the right response – no bogging just ready to pull another gear.

It felt like the spread of power had increased over the '08 model with more power to work with. The motor does let you hold on to the gears that bit longer, not that this is the best way to ride but in some conditions and on some track layouts it's essential.

The chassis felt like it was working well on this hard track and coming into the turns it was just something special. It's so nice to turn and I always managed to place the bike just where I wanted it. Exiting the turns – even when the track was cutting up – the rear was working a treat.

Straight line stability on this bike is top notch with no signs of any headshake – just pure straight line power. The ride of this bike really suited me, the riding position is very comfortable and the position of the bars and seat is spot on.

One big thing I always look at with these modern four-strokes is starting capability. There was not one point in the day where I had to kick it over more than twice before it fired up. This really is a big thing nowadays, the number of times I've been watching a race and someone has gone down or stalled it and then sat there for a few laps just isn't funny and it's great to know that the KXF starts easily when hot or cold.



The 250F needs to be treated with respect out of corners

SPECIFICATIONS

KX250F >>

Capacity:	249cc
Bore and stroke:	77mm x 53.6mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Fuel tank capacity:	Eight litres
Front suspension:	Showa USD 47mm (315mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Showa (315mm travel)
Front brake:	250mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Seat height:	955mm
Wheelbase:	1470mm
Ground clearance:	340mm
Weight:	104.3kg





GREECE MONKEYS!

THE FRENCH GO APE IN SERRES TO TOP THE TROPHY TEAM TABLE FROM
PRE-EVENT FAVOURITES ITALY AT THE 83RD RUNNING OF THE ISDE

Words and photos by Jenty Edmunds

isde

**Kari Tiainen helps BMW
record a 100 per cent
finishing rate in the
German marque's
first ever ISDE**



Not even the absence of current WEC Enduro 2 class leader Johnny Aubert can stop France winning the Trophy Team competition at this year's ISDE. Fired up and determined to claim their first team victory since winning at home in '01, France's defeat of defending champs Italy is seen by many as a triumph of passion and determination over funding.

As well as France's victory it's the dry and – more importantly – dusty conditions that for most competitors serve as the lasting memory of the event. With no rain having fallen on the mountains around Serres for several months prior to the start of the competition, the powder-like terrain causes problems for all riders – especially on the special tests.

For Britain the 83rd ISDE ends unsatisfactorily. Always unlikely to challenge the 'top' teams with no Knight, Edmondson or McConnell in the senior squad, the hard, dry and dusty Greek terrain makes things difficult for our Trophy Team boys. Finishing the event in 21st position isn't exactly what any of the team expect but with two riders – Daryl Bolter and Dylan Jones – exiting the competition before the final day Britain stands no chance of getting anywhere near a top 10 result.

Thankfully, Britain's Junior Trophy Team fairs much better, securing eighth in class. Although no match for Italy, Australia, France or Spain, Lee Edmondson, Ashley Wood, Ollie Moyce and Jamie Paget end the event having had no major dramas.

But at the head of the Junior Trophy Team competition Italy are in a class of their own. From day one they show they're going to be hard to beat and come the end of the event amass a huge 12-minute winning margin.

Two British riders finish inside the top 10 of their respective classes in the Club Team competition. Andrew Edwards, competing for Wales, finishes 10th in the C1 class aboard his 125cc KTM. But arguably one of the most impressive performances is that of Irishman Philip McLaughlin who rides his 250cc TM to fifth in C2.

At the sharp end of the competition Spain's Ivan Cervantes emerges as the overall individual winner having seen US rider Kurt Caselli crash out, countryman Cristobal Guerrero injure his leg and then Finn Juha Salminen DNF his final motocross race after crashing and damaging his throttle. In winning the overall Cervantes also tops the Enduro 1 class. Not by a lot but by enough.

Pushing him every step of the way is US Trophy Team rider Ricky Dietrich. Right at home on the dry terrain, Ricky D even manages to win the E1 class on day two and maintains his pressure on Cervantes right up until the end of the final motocross race on day six. Third and an important member of the French squad is Julien Gaultier. Despite his lack of recent international experience the plucky Honda rider rises to the occasion to secure a well deserved result. >>

Christophe Nambotin ends the six days in third in E3



Bartosz Oblucki tears up the Greek countryside

HIGHSANDLOWS!

MIXED FORTUNES FOR BRITS

Despite plying his trade in the XC2 class of the US GNCC series, Welshman Jason Thomas is this year's best performing Brit at the ISDE in Greece and claims a creditable 11th in Enduro 1.

Finding the dusty conditions challenging, Jason's pleased with his week's work. "It would have been nice to finish top 10 but 11th isn't too far away. I didn't have any major problems all week apart from the dust and although I didn't have great third and fourth days the event went well."

In complete contrast the 83rd ISDE ends early for British Trophy Team rider Daryl Bolter who at the time of exiting the competition mid-event was heading towards a deserved top 10 E1 result.



Tiainen gets busy with the lube

STAYING POWER!

BMW'S ISDE TORTURE TEST

It might not look it from the results but this year's ISDE is both an important and successful one for German manufacturer BMW. Having improved the performance of its G450X during this year's WEC series, the 83rd ISDE sees BMW enter its first ever six days.

With not one but two seven-time world champions competing aboard its bikes, BMW score a 100 per cent finish rate as Anders Eriksson, Kari Tiainen and Spaniard Xacob Agra all complete the event without problems.

"It's great for BMW that all three riders completed the race without problems," comments Finn Tiainen, who came out of retirement to compete in the event. "All I did was change tyres and air filters all week."



Juha Salminen sees his chance of victory end in the final motocross race



isde

Nate Kanney helps the USA to third in the Trophy Team competition



Anders Eriksson hammers the G450X through a rare bit of Greek shade

Overall victory goes to Ivan Cervantes



KING IVAN!

CERVANTES SECURES OVERALL WIN

As Spain's first ever world enduro champion, factory KTM rider Ivan Cervantes is used to creating headlines for all the right reasons. And at this year's six days the flamboyant E3 champ once again shows why he is without question Spain's #1 enduro star by claiming the overall individual win in Serres.

"It's unbelievable," grins Ivan after the final day's motocross races. "I was lucky because Juha should have won the overall but it's an amazing bonus for me. I wanted to win the Enduro 1 class which I did but winning the overall as well is fantastic."

Victory in the E1 class doesn't come easy for Cervantes though, despite WEC arch-rival Mika Ahola opting not to compete. Pushed every step of the way by US rider Ricky Dietrich, Ivan's eventual Enduro 1 class winning margin is just over half-a-minute.

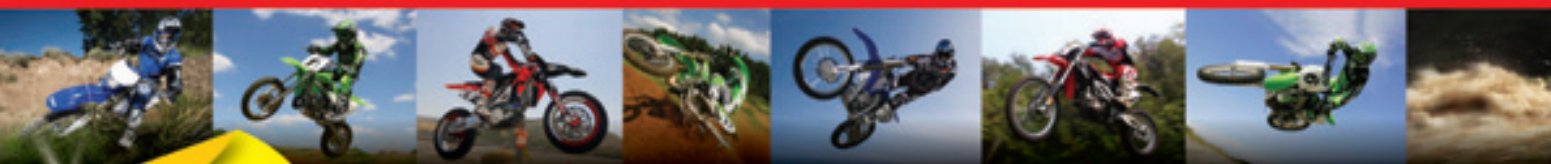


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STAYING HYDRATED

Hot, dry and rocky, the conditions in Greece are super-tough and as a result of the dust several big-name riders crash out with many others finding the sun-baked event extremely difficult.

Making things even harder is the fact that competitors are forced to ride for hours on end with only limited time to take on food or drink. Thankfully, as part of their ongoing support for the British ISDE teams, Kriega hydration packs ensure that the heat is much less of a problem for Britain's Trophy and Junior Trophy teams than it is for many others.

"I'm extremely grateful for the generous support and sponsorship that numerous companies show towards the British team effort and I know that the riders are as well," comments Brit Team Manager Dusty Martin. "But this year the support from Kriega in particular has come into its own as their hydration packs have made things a lot easier - and safer - for our riders."

RESULTS

TROPHY TEAM >>

1	France	14.50:25.78
2	Italy	14.51:19.37
3	USA	14.58:45.82
4	Spain	15.06:52.83
5	Finland	15.08:48.17
6	Australia	15.12:03.82
7	Sweden	15.15:32.88
8	Germany	15.32:31.11
9	Holland	15.37:11.50
10	Poland	15.39:13.49
21	Great Britain	20.15:09.12

JUNIOR TROPHY TEAM >>

1	Italy	9.02:23.57
2	Australia	9.14:36.57
3	France	9.17:21.88
4	Spain	9.21:56.76
5	Finland	9.26:10.83
6	Germany	9.32:24.83
7	Portugal	9.36:40.25
8	Great Britain	9.38:47.15
9	Sweden	9.43:22.87
10	New Zealand	9.48:34.72

The '08 ISDE is a disappointing event for Tom Sagar and the rest of the British Trophy Team



The Enduro 2 class should have been topped by Juha Salminen. But the Finn's disappointing six day luck continues and needing realistically to only finish his final motocross race the seven-time world champ highsides coming out of the first turn and several riders hit his bike, smashing his throttle housing. The super-frustrating thing for Juha is that he'd already claimed one perfect holeshot only for that race to be red flagged.

The eventual E2 winner is Italian Alessandro Belometti. Well aware that he's a little lucky, Bello' puts his two-stroke KTM one-minute clear of Frenchman Rodrig Thain on his TM. With Thain the only Frenchman at the top of the E2 results, Italians fill three of the top four positions to dominate the class.

But while Italy are strong in E2, France are the strongest in E3. Although not winning the class - that accolade goes to Finn Marko Tarkkala - by placing second and third Seb Guillaume and Christophe Nambotin do enough during the event to help secure the win for France.

The Enduro 3 class sees more than its fair share of drama during the event. First US rider Kurt Caselli sets the pace as he hopes to claim his first ever overall ISDE win having come close in Chile last year. But after crashing heavily the KTM rider calls it a day with concussion.

Next up it's Seb Guillaume who takes control of the class. But on day five he drifts wide on a corner and wraps a trackside banner into his rear wheel. After losing valuable time removing it he drops to the runner-up position.

Heading into the final motocross race it's Aussie Stefan Merriman who leads. But that doesn't last long. Overcooking the first corner he has to work his way from the back of the field to claim an eventual fourth in class.

By winning the E3 final motocross race Marko Tarkkala - who at the start of the event certainly wasn't setting the world alight with his speed - does enough to keep himself ahead of Guillaume to secure the win and in doing so ensures KTM top each of the three classes.

OVER+ OUT!

MACKENZIE AND SIMPSON TAKE THE TITLES AS THE MAXXIS
BRITISH MX SERIES SIGNS OFF AT HAWKSTONE PARK

Words by Sean Lawless Photo by Suttty

Heading into the final round of the Maxxis British MX championship at the historic Hawkstone Park circuit, defending MX1 champ Billy MacKenzie – the dominant force in this year's series give or take the odd GP-sustained injury – looks a virtual shoe-in for the crown.

So strong has Billiam been this year that even with a no-show at Desertmartin and a damage limitation exercise at Brampton following his big Czecho get-off, the CAS/Monster Energy Honda rider is 22 points clear of second-placed James Noble.

Down in MX2 it's been a two-horse race with Shaun Simpson and Stephen Sword slugging it out all season. Swordy's injuries (but let's not forget the heroic ride from Simpson with a freshly-plated collarbone at Brampton) mean the KTM UK-mounted Scot has a 15-point lead over the Molson Kawasaki-mounted Scot.

What this means is Swordy has to win both motos and hope that Simpson has a 'mare if he's to grab his fourth British crown. And Stevie does exactly that, converting two holeshots into two race wins to snatch a maximum 50-point haul and give himself a fighting chance of the title.

But following several seasons screwed over by injury Shaun's not about to screw things up now. After starting near the front in race one he hauls through to second at the flag and then follows this up with a safe second in the final moto of the series to make sure of his first British title.

"Today's been a rollercoaster," grins Shaun. "This morning I set the fastest lap – I've always liked this track and I went well here at the international so my speed was obviously good. In the first race I got a good start but got stuck behind a few guys for 10 minutes and Stephen got away so I just rode an easy second.

"I thought if I could take the second win and take the overall that would be an awesome way to end the season but it wasn't to be. The second race felt about two hours long – the track's been pretty gnarly today with some big bumps and I had a few sketchy moments but it all came together in the end.

"With four laps to go I was thinking 'I've got this in the bag, just don't do anything stupid' and I stopped doing some of the sections – I should just have kept going because it's a fact that if you slow down you're

more prone to crash so you might as well go race speed. Swanny was catching me up and a few other things were going on so it was hard to concentrate but I was just gauging my speed off Stephen and I was keeping up with him so it was good enough."

For Billy Mac his day in the office is more like the Friday after deadline for the DBR team (okay, without the liquid lunch). A win in the opening moto – irrespective of where Noble finishes – will be enough for him to retain his title and, true to form, the Scot is up to the job.

PAR Homes' Ray Rowson – who's come back from injury to post some storming results this season – sets the early pace with Billy right on his back wheel. And even when Billy finally finds a way past the local man hangs with him for a good few laps until the GP rider's extra speed pulls him clear.

With the title in the bag Billy goes old-school for race two and wheels out a '01 steel-framed 500cc two-stroke, immaculately prepped by team boss Neil Prince. A little too immaculately prepped as it turns out...

Rawson's already won a Maxxis moto this year and he hits the front early on and never looks back. Billy pushes his five-tonner into the top five early doors but they've not ground down the frame's fresh powdercoat on the engine mounts and the big stroker starts vibrating like an Ann Summers special. He pits to see if anything can be done but his race is run.

So Rowson gets the overall from Tom Church and Brad Anderson but Billy makes it two on the bounce.

"That was always the goal to win the championship and CAS made it a lot easier for me with the bike they have," says Billy. "They've got an impressive record and I'm glad I could add to the tally. It's been a good day – especially riding the 500 in the last race.

"We powder-coated the frame and basically we didn't file it down before we tightened the engine up so the powdercoat came loose and the engine came loose. It was a handful – it was vibrating so much coming up the hill that my hands were coming off.

"I wanted to go old-school – I just wanted to see what it was like for those boys back in the day and it was awesome, real smooth power and it was hooking up so good in the nice long berms. I loved it! In fact we should go back, we should go back to the 500s."

FINAL STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1	Billy MacKenzie	(Monster CAS Honda)	305 points
2	James Noble	(KTM UK)	288
3	Brad Anderson	(Swift Suzuki)	277
4	Mark Jones	(ARB Kawasaki)	249
5	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	234
6	Wayne Smith	(Pioneer Yamaha)	195
7	Mark Eastwood	(Wiseco Honda)	177
8	Bryan MacKenzie	(Twisted-7 Kawasaki)	153
9	Mark Hucklebridge	(MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	124
10	Ray Rowson	(PAR Homes Honda)	123

MX2 >>

1	Shaun Simpson	(KTM UK)	342 points
2	Stephen Sword	(Molson Kawasaki)	333
3	Martin Barr	(UTAG Yamaha)	245
4	Neville Bradshaw	(DB Racing Honda)	206
5	Carl Nunn	(Suso Suzuki)	190
6	Elliot Banks-Brown	(Swift Suzuki)	185
7	Jason Dougan	(Suso Suzuki)	162
8	Marcus Norlen	(Suso Suzuki)	155
9	Mel Pocock	(UTAG Yamaha)	137
10	Lewis Gregory	(Relentless Suzuki)	136

*With Billy DN'ing on the
500cc stroker Ray Rowson
takes the MX1 overall*





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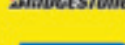
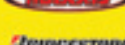
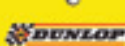
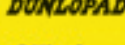
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Manuel Priem is sensational in the second moto at Lierop



Steve Ramon loses his title after just one season



Shaun Simpson jumps 20 places in the world rankings in 2008



Nico Aubin just pips Shaun Simpson for third in the MX2 division

Things get even worse for the Suzuki rider in Faenza as he limps home to 11th in the opening moto – one place ahead of Tom Church – to slip back to third in the series standings behind team-mate De Dycker. Philippaerts finishes third in race one to extend his lead to 23 points meaning he only has to finish 18th if De Dycker wins the moto and 20th if Ramon removes his digit.

Surprisingly, Steve actually does do that and if it wasn't for an on-form Max Nagl who short-shifts his torquey toomer to his second win of the day, Ramon would have notched up his third moto win of the season. Not that it would have made the slightest bit of difference to the championship as Philippaerts gingerly cruises across the line in ninth to take his first ever world title.

Ramon ends the year second and De

Dycker third ahead of Jonathan Barragan and Josh Coppins who went from being the dominant force in MX1 during 2007 to being a bit of a damp squib in '08.

Billy MacKenzie's lucky to finish the year at all as a big crash in qualifying at Lierop sidelines the Scot with damaged intercostal muscles in his rib cage. Bravely bouncing back to action in Faenza, Billy does enough to ensure he finishes ninth in the series on the CAS Honda.

TC has his best ever world championship season in his rookie year in the big-bore division, jumping to 17th in the final standings. James Noble's next best Brit in 19th while Brad Anderson's first full year of GP competition ends on a sour note after he breaks his collarbone at the Ken Hall International and is a no-show for the final three rounds.

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1	David Philippaerts	(Monster Yamaha)	509 points
2	Steve Ramon	(Tekka Suzuki)	495
3	Ken De Dycker	(Tekka Suzuki)	490
4	Jonathan Barragan	(Silver Action KTM)	455
5	Josh Coppins	(Monster Yamaha)	446
6	Max Nagl	(Red Bull KTM)	444
7	Sebastien Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	392
8	Tanel Leok	(Kawasaki Racing Team)	352
9	Billy MacKenzie	(CAS Honda)	320
10	Marc De Reuver	(Honda Martin)	292
17	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	109
19	James Noble	(KTM UK)	94
23	Brad Anderson	(Swift Suzuki)	54
36	Gordon Crockard	(PAR Honda)	14
45	Wayne Smith	(Pioneer Yamaha)	5
50	Jordan Rose	(STR Honda)	3
55	Stuart Edmonds	(TM)	1

MX2 >>

1	Tyla Ratray	(Red Bull KTM)	636 points
2	Tommy Searle	(Red Bull KTM)	613
3	Nico Aubin	(Ricci Yamaha)	406
4	Shaun Simpson	(KTM UK)	394
5	Rui Goncalves	(Red Bull KTM)	380
6	Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	357
7	Xavier Boog	(Inotec Suzuki)	307
8	Jeremy Van Horebeek	(Champ KTM)	299
9	Stephen Sword	(Molson Kawasaki)	291
10	Steven Frossard	(CLS Kawasaki)	289
18	Carl Nunn	(Suso Suzuki)	118
21	Gautier Paulin	(Molson Kawasaki)	95
22	Zach Osborne	(UTAG Yamaha)	77
28	Jason Dougan	(Suso Suzuki)	48
29	Jake Nicholls	(Swift Suzuki)	41
30	Pascal Leuret	(Swift Suzuki)	36
31	Elliot Banks-Browne	(Swift Suzuki)	33
32	Gareth Swanepoel	(Molson Kawasaki)	31
43	Marcus Norlen	(Suso Suzuki)	11
48	Martin Barr	(UTAG Yamaha)	6
59	Neville Bradshaw	(DB Racing Honda)	2



David Philippaerts has to wait until the final race of the season to clinch the MX1 crown



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A motocross rider is captured in mid-air, performing a wheelie. The rider is wearing a brown and yellow jersey, brown pants, and a green and black helmet with goggles. The motorcycle is red and white, with a large amount of mud splattered on the lower half. The background shows a grassy field, a fence, and a crowd of spectators in the distance.

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FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

65cc

1	Ben Green	1089 points
2	Robert Yates	1030
3	Jason Meara	983
4	Ryan Snaith	907
5	Jay Lamb	847
6	Josh Gilbert	826

SW85cc

1	Jordan Godwin	1028 points
2	Michael Eccles	1003
3	Callan Cooper	910
4	Ben Watson	882
5	Ricky Roderick	855
6	Corie Southwood	854

BW85cc

1	Luke Hawkins	1057 points
2	Dan Hutchinson	988
3	Ryan Houghton	981
4	Bradley Pocock	912
5	Jamie McCanney	843
6	Bryn Clarke	823

OPEN

1	Scott Elderfield	800 points
2	Edward Allingham	689
3	Lewis King	668
4	Joe Gregory	655
5	Tommy Fenwick	655
6	David Games	637

Open honours go
to Scott Elderfield



SW85cc runner-up
Michael Eccles



GAMEOVER!

THE FAT LADY SINGS FOR BYMX BATTLERS

For the finale of this year's BYMX competition the youth circus had to be pulled uphill and gently cajoled across a choice piece of Worcestershire's finest sticky brown stuff by tractors before it could set up camp at Longdon to decide the destination of this year's titles.

The dice were well and truly loaded however to roll just one way as the championship leaders held sway with comfortable margins in all four classes. Messrs Green, Godwin, Hawkins and Elderfield just had to hold on to their nerve, keep one eye on the calculator and the other firmly on the angry mob of chasers intent on spoiling the party if they were to lift the ultimate prizes in youth motocross.

With fifth overall on the weekend Ben Green took a laidback approach to claiming his silverware in the 65s as Danny Lanfear and Robert Yates went wild, sharing out the four race wins between them.

In the SW85s Jordan Godwin kept everyone guessing and doing the maths right up to the final race as second-placed Mickey Eccles tore

into his comfort zone. Full-on effort from the Kawasaki terrier clawed back 42 points but he still ended up 25 shy of glory as Ben Watson showed his undoubted class with all four race wins.

Over in the BW85s more sensational form from Bradley Pocock with two chequered flag rides snatched the end-of-season bragging rights and fourth in the series. Luke Hawkins, however, with yet another rapid and controlled display bagged youth title number two as Dan Hutchinson beat off the challenge of this season's other sensational performer Ryan Houghton for the runner-up spot in the tightest battle of the weekend.

Scott Elderfield – sporting his third change of colours for the season – is now plying his trade under the Honda wing and he signed out of the BYMX in cruise mode taking all three race wins to underline his dominance, talent and future potential. Edward Allingham finished runner-up, just getting the better of Lewis King who performed a minor miracle to get the two-stroke TM into third place in the final standings.

CUPCLASH!

EYC GEARS UP FOR CANADA HEIGHTS SHOWDOWN

Looking ahead to the final round of this year's Elite Youth Cup at Canada Heights on October 18/19 and it's pretty clear we're not going to get the epic cliff-hanger that last season's finale produced as most of the titles seem to be done and dusted.

The shootout between Ben Green and Danny Lanfear at the top of the 65cc tree followed by Kellett and Snaith battling for third should be one to keep an eye on but the best battle of the weekend could well come in the SW85cc ranks as Ben Watson, Liam Garland

and Ricky Roderick go hard at it for the number two berth behind runaway leader James Dunn. The SW guys have been brilliant all season and Canada Heights should be the icing on the cake.

Luke Hawkins looks safe for the BW85cc crown but he will have to fight off Brad Pocock for the end-of-season bragging rights. Likewise, Turbo Taylor in the Seniors and Scott Elderfield in the Open class have already cleared a space in their trophy cabinets for another chunk of silverware.



Maximum effort from Ben Field

SERIES STANDINGS

JUNIOR 65cc

1	Ben Green	1159 points
2	Danny Lanfear	1101
3	Todd Kellett	975
4	Ryan Snaith	973
5	Joshua Gilbert	811
6	Conrad Mewse	806

SW85cc

1	James Dunn	1199 points
2	Liam Garland	1024
3	Ben Watson	997
4	Rickie Roderick	988
5	Josh Turner	892
6	Adam Sterry	727

BW85cc

1	Luke Hawkins	1259 points
2	Bradley Pocock	1161
3	Jamie McCanney	967
4	Bryn Clarke	771
5	Anthony Reville	762
6	Ty Kellett	757

SENIORS

1	Christian Taylor	1302 points
2	Ryan Turner	1176
3	Jasper Uphill	1055
4	Jamie Houghton	906
5	Nicole Hatcliffe	833
6	Liam Gill	582

OPEN

1	Scott Elderfield	1253 points
2	Lewis Tombs	1021
3	Josh Waterman	944
4	Lewis Trickett	790
5	James Hutchinson	756
6	Ben Field	753

Lewis Tombs is running second in the Open class



SPOTLIGHT ON...

RYAN SNAITH

DOB: 29-05-97

HOMETOWN: GREAT WYRLEY

BIKE: REDLINE KTM

A broken collarbone for Ryan Snaith mid-term '07 disappointed and disrupted his rookie BSMA national season. But a blistering single race win at last season's Best of British finale at Little Silver where Ryan showed champion elect Liam Knight a clean pair of heels gave more than a hint of his true potential and a flavour of things to come.

After the opening two rounds of this year's BYMX and Elite series the 11-year-old from Great Wyrley in Staffordshire – who has been racing since he was six – had exceeded his wildest expectations with a series of barnstorming displays that put him at the top of the Junior 65cc standings for both national codes. With five combined individual race victories and three overall podium wins Ryan really had something to smile about.

It was a magnificent start to the season for the tall, stylish Redline KTM pilot who set out this year with a top six finish in mind as a season's goal. He had thoughts of getting his name engraved on a major piece of silverware but round three of both competitions proved to be his undoing as an ankle injury at Brampton (BYMX) and a weekend of machine failures at Mildenhall (Elite) dropped Ryan off the top spots as the competitive 65cc pack pounced.

At the moment Ryan's still well inside his original season's goal and holds fourth place in the EYC going into the final round and secured fourth overall in the BYMX. Things could have been so much better if the early season momentum not been shattered but it has still been a great season for the youngster.

Looking forward to next year the Justin Morris training school prodigy will again be KTM-mounted for a crack at the SW85s in both the Elite and BYMX championships with added support from MC Motors and Golden Tyres. Fingers crossed for a trouble-free season...



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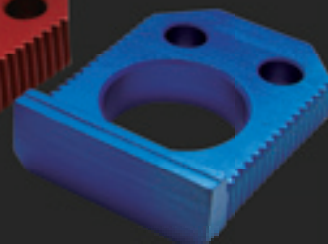


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MASTERS MASTERS CLINCH CROWNS

As we get down to the sharp end of the season when the fat lady sings and finally dishes out the silverware, West Country bullet Luke Hawkins enjoyed another routine day in the office to get his hands on the first of what should become a famous season's hat-trick of youth BW85cc titles.

With an astonishing run of consistency and PAR Honda reliability he again totally dominated the final round of this year's Masters series. Luke cleaned up with four more race wins to complete an unblemished 24-race-winning sequence that began in March amid atrocious conditions at Culham and finished spindle-deep in the brown stuff at Foxhill.

The muddy conditions curtailed the SW fun on day two but James Dunn had the title well wrapped up by then for the Relentless Suzuki team even though Callan Cooper put his pedal to the metal with the final two race wins in Wiltshire.

Scott Elderfield posted another three race wins to finish third in this year's Youth 125cc series but it was all a little bit academic as Scott only raced four of the seven rounds. The winner on the weekend and well worthy of the title too was Vytautas Bucas who took the plaudits and the laurels aboard the ARB Tuning Kawasaki with Danger UK's Dan Brough in second.

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

SW85cc

1	James Dunn	1019 points
2	Callan Cooper	906
3	Ricky Roderick	887

BW85cc

1	Luke Hawkins	1200 points
2	Anthony Reville	1026
3	Luke Norris	947

YOUTH 125cc

1	Vytautas Bucas	1000 points
2	Dan Brough	944
3	Scott Elderfield	750



James Dunn's a clear winner in the SW85cc class



BW85cc champ Luke Hawkins

OUR PINT-SIZED STATESIDE STAR IS GETTING IN SOME SCRUBBIN' AND WHIPPIN' AS HE PREPARES FOR BERCY

Words by Max Anstie

Hello everyone! I was back hanging out in England – recovering and taking a break after a long season in America and the world championships in Holland a month ago. The weather in England as you all might know wasn't exactly the greatest but I love training in the rain as well. I've been riding my new 2009 KTM 125SX. The bike is soooooo cool. I don't even have to ride it – it drives itself!

My dad put together some riding schools for kids to come down and train so I was pulling fatty scrubs for everyone. My little brother, Taylor, was actually one of the students...he's only five but he rips! WATCH OUT!

I made it back to America – only a seven-week trip this time because I will be making my yearly appearance at Sheffield. It was a long flight but I feel like I'm ready to go again. The first day back we took out our 125 supercross bike and put in a few good laps at the KTM supercross training facility in California with my fellow KTM riders Justin Brayton and Ryan Sipes. We were all out there doing big scrubs n' whips and it was lots of fun. We are all getting ready to race Bercy! It's going to be a blast over there riding a 125cc. They have changed it this year and instead of an 85cc class it is now for 125s – Chad, you better be nervous...ha, ha!

I've been practising outdoors as well at places like Glen Helen and some secret tracks we know of in the hills of Southern California as the Dodge Amateur National is coming up at Hangtown. I'm really excited to go up there in a few weeks and race. This will be my first race with NO minibikes under the KTM awning...

My team manager Revvin' Devin, my dad and I are loading up the KTM Sprinter and we're off now to Monterey, California, to watch the last Red Bull Rookies Cup Race at Laguna Seca and then heading straight over the next day to Sacramento for the national!

Oh, one last thing...when we were at Glen Helen training one Thursday I met a fellow Brit but in a different sort of motorbike racing – Neil Hodgson the superbike racer. Good luck at Laguna Seca!

Mighty Max is getting ready for Hangtown



SPOTLIGHT ON...

CONRAD MEWSE

DOB: 21-4-99

HOMETOWN: SHEPTON MALLET

BIKE: MILES MX KTM

Nine-year-old Conrad Mewse with his tenacious attitude and explosive turn of speed has been impressing all season in the Junior 65cc ranks of this year's Elite Youth Cup competition.

A string of consistent results for the unassuming Shepton Mallet youngster early and mid-season have attracted more than a little bit of positive attention around the paddock. Over the last two rounds however – at Landrake and most recently at Marshfield – Conrad has raised the bar even higher by snatching national race wins from under the noses of the likes of Ben Green, Danny Lanfear and Ryan Snaith. Not too many nine-year-olds post national wins against champions elect!

These national race wins together with a meteoric progress through the ranks this year for Conrad almost mirrors Ben Watson's exploits in '06 before his mega championship winning season of '07 so it all bodes well for Conrad's future. A national title for Mr Mewse in '09? I wouldn't bet against it!

Watch this space and remember the name...





NOCOMPROMISE!

BILLY'S NEVER BEEN A GUY TO SETTLE FOR WHAT HE'S GOT SO WHEN HE GETS A SNIFF OF SECOND OVERALL AT THE MXdN HE AIN'T ABOUT TO SHUT OFF...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photos by Sully

Okay! That's the season over so it's time for a bit of playtime, chilling out and getting over the injuries that have been pissing me off for the past few weeks. I've already booked up to fly to Thailand with Dougan where the fun will start as we head for the full moon party which is meant to be the nuts! Then we'll be making our way down to Australia and New Zealand where I'll race the Oceania motocross event. All in all a round trip of about five weeks so I should have plenty of stories to tell you all when I get back!

I better mention Hawkstone. Yet again I had left it to the last round to secure the championship but there's nothing new there and it wasn't through a lack of trying on my behalf. I've just had one injury after the other this year but, to get to the point, I wrapped it up in the first race with a win which was awesome. It didn't quite meet the same feeling as winning it for the first time last year but I was still pumped all the same – especially as I could now stick to my word and pull out the 500cc two-stroke for the final race!

Tricked up with Monster graphics, a nice comfy sofa seat and plenty of power, I was loving it! The more the race went on the better I felt on it and sitting in fourth was not bad at all! However, not long into the race the engine came slack and it was rattling its tits off so I had to pull in. It was nice to give something back to everyone and I enjoyed it as well so overall it was a good day at the office!

Leading up to the Motocross des Nations it was cool to be around the team and have a bit of banter. Shaun and Easty came up to mine to stay to hang it out with me and Tommy for the week. The boys were out riding while I rested my ribs up a little although I did put in a couple of laps to keep myself happy as it's no fun watching and feeling you're missing out. And riding your BMX is definitely in these days! We had plenty of that which created a huge amount of laughs!

Friday of the Nations is usually a busy day, Easty had us out walking the track, press conferences, interviews, photos etc. The usual stuff that comes along with motocross. However, we take full advantage of making some fun out of it. Last year at Budds Creek we were all given a word that we needed to sly into our reply to whatever question we were asked at the press conference. Mine was 'gerbil', Tommy's was

'merkin', James had 'bell' and Easty's was 'helmet.' We all managed to do it even though we were crying with laughter. It was hilarious! And this year was no different but with an extra word thrown in! So I led by example by slyly adding 'beef curtains' although it was the most un-sly thing you've ever seen – ha ha! Tommy was first to let the team down by bottling out of 'Pat's gooch' while Shaun made it Scotland 2, England 0 with 'hoop invasion' which supposedly he had been playing on the PS3 with us during the week? I think Stevie helped him with that one but funny all the same!

Easty was last once again but this time with 'badger spotting' and after his dominant performance last year I fully expected him to regain some pride for the English side but it wasn't to be! The press guy asked him a question about the game we were playing which pretty much just killed the whole thing and that was that! A good laugh all the same!

On the Saturday I had a good qualifier, I gated well and put my head down to keep with Stewart for as long as possible but with a little arm pump I couldn't push as much as I wanted to so dropped back a couple of places but as a team we did well and got ourselves a not bad gate pick for the Sunday.

Now onto the dreaded Sunday and we all rode awesome! And fully deserved better than what we got in the end. I was well up for it, the boys were there with their 'Big Jock 211' banner and everyone was getting right behind us. Like I've said before, I don't like talking much about bad races – I know I was riding well and I felt good that second race. I knew what I had to do coming into that race. Okay, I made a vital mistake when I over-jumped and landed on some braking bumps which spat me off the bike. But I want you all to know that I wasn't content for settling for an easy third overall. I was gunning for second! I knew that had I passed Max Nagl for third then second overall was ours! These things happen but I'll be even more motivated for next year!

To top it all off there was nowhere else to be than the Monster Energy party at the end of the night. Easily the best night of the year! Not even a power cut halfway through could spoil it. We were all on it, dancing flat-out and checking out the Monster girls. It was simply an awesome set up! Having everyone there was the best ***** and I look forward to more to come!

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